

Uganda: Birds, Gorillas & Chimpanzees Itinerary

[Link: Uganda: Birds, Gorillas & Chimpanzees](#)

Tour Overview

Experience the Best of Uganda! Uganda, once referred to as the pearl of Africa, has long been famed as a “Bird Watcher’s Delight” supporting at least one thousand species and all within a small area.

Our carefully curated itinerary begins with a visit to Mabamba Swamp, one of the most reliable places to see the extraordinary Shoebill. We then explore the vast habitats of Murchison Falls National Park, where we get northern African species and then visit the Royal Mile a place birders refer to as the best for forest birding with numerous west African rarities.

We continue to Kibale Forest for chimp tracking and the elusive Green-breasted Pitta, and into the Semliki Valley, celebrated for its Guinea-Congo biome endemics and hornbills. The journey continues through the savannahs of Queen Elizabeth National Park and into the montane forests of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park, home to the iconic Mountain Gorillas and a wealth of Albertine Rift endemics, including the Grauer’s Broadbill and Grauer’s Swamp Warbler. We’ll conclude with a visit to Lake Mburo National Park. You can also expect to see a diversity of African mammals including zebras, elephants, lions and more.

This will be a truly marvelous and unforgettable birding and wildlife adventure!

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival and Optional Birding in the Entebbe Environs



Upon arrival at Entebbe International Airport, we transfer to our lodge. Depending on the time of arrival, optional birding can be done in the lush grounds of the Entebbe Botanical Gardens, where both forest and lakeshore species can be observed. Possible sightings include Palm-nut Vulture, Great Blue Turaco, Eastern Plantain-eater, Congo Pied Hornbill, Splendid Starling, Orange and Slender-billed Weavers, Golden-backed Weaver, and more. In the evening, watch for the Bat Hawk. Other notable birds include Bare-faced Go-away-bird, Ross's Turaco, Klaas's and Dideric Cuckoo, Fan-tailed Widowbird, and several kingfishers: Striped, Malachite, Giant, Woodland, and African Pygmy. Look out also for Black Bishop, African Gray Woodpecker, Olive-bellied Sunbird, Red-chested, Superb, Copper, and Green-throated Sunbirds. Dinner and overnight at Papyrus Guest House.

Day 2: Birding Mabamba Swamp - Shoebill Stork



Today we transfer early to Mabamba Swamp, located south of Entebbe. En route, we may spot Papyrus Gonolek, Western Banded Snake-Eagle, White-winged Swamp Warbler, Red-headed Lovebird, Double-toothed Barbet, and Weyns's Weaver. Mabamba is one of the most reliable places to see the extraordinary Shoebill Stork. Other highlights include Allen's Gallinule, Lesser and African Jacana, Rufous-bellied Heron, and Goliath Herons, and a variety of egrets and ducks. If we did not bird the Botanical Gardens on Day 1, we may visit them this afternoon. Dinner and overnight at Papyrus Guest House.

Day 3: Birding to Masindi via Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary



We depart Entebbe, driving through Kampala toward Masindi via the Luwero Triangle and undulating grasslands. En route, we visit Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary, a privately owned reserve focused on breeding White Rhinos for reintroduction into Uganda's protected areas. Led by a ranger, we will trek on foot to view rhinos in their natural habitat and learn about their conservation. Continuing to Masindi, we bird along the way, with chances to see White-crested Turaco, Bronze-tailed Starling, Greater and Lesser Blue-eared Starlings, Black-winged Bishop, White-headed Barbet, Cardinal and Nubian Woodpeckers, Lesser and Greater Honeyguides, Gray-capped Warbler, White-shouldered Black Tit, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Brown Twin-spot, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Broad-billed Roller, Piapiac, Lizard Buzzard, Gray Kestrel, Lesser Striped and Angola Swallows, Sooty Chat, and Western Black-headed Batis. Dinner and overnight at Masindi Hotel or similar.

Day 4: Royal Mile Birding and Transfer to Northern Murchison Falls



We start early and head to the famous Royal Mile, once a ceremonial road of the Bunyoro Kingdom. Along the way, we make birding stops for species such as Singing Cisticola, Cabanis's Bunting, Gray-headed Oliveback, Black-bellied Firefinch, and Zebra Waxbill. In the Mile itself, notable forest species include Ituri Batis, Lemon-bellied Crombec, Yellow-breasted Forest Robin, Nahan's Partridge, Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Western Black-headed Oriole, Red-headed Malimbe, Blue-throated Roller, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, and Golden-crowned Woodpecker. Continuing via Busingiro and over the escarpment, we enter one of Uganda's best birding zones, with possibilities including Foxy Cisticola, Northern Crombec, Gray-headed Bushshrike, Red-winged Pytilia, Mocking Cliff-Chat, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, and more. We end the day crossing the Nile into northern Murchison Falls National Park. Dinner and overnight at Pakuba Safari Lodge or similar.

Day 5: Birding Northern Murchison Falls



A highlight of our time here is the afternoon boat cruise to the base of Murchison Falls. Along the way, we expect to see a wide variety of birds and mammals including Rothschild's Giraffe, African Buffalo, Elephants, Waterbuck, and more. Key birds to watch for include Red-throated and Northern Carmine Bee-eaters, Saddle-billed, Yellow-billed, and African Open-billed Storks, Heuglin's Spurfowl, Senegal Thick-knee, Rock Pratincole, and numerous kingfishers such as Giant, Woodland, Gray-headed, Malachite, Pygmy, and Striped Kingfisher. On game drives, we'll look for Black-billed Barbet, Northern and Red-faced Crombecs, Abyssinian Rollers, Abyssinian Ground Hornbills, Dickinson's Kestrel, Shelley's Rufous Sparrow, Speckle-fronted and White-browed Sparrow-weavers, Black Scimitarbill, and Spotted and Senegal Thick-knee. We also keep an eye out for the elusive Patas Monkey. We will try a night drive with chances of spotting nocturnal mammals and birds such as Leopard, White-tailed Mongoose, Lion, Grayish Eagle-Owl, and multiple nightjars including Standard-winged, Pennant-winged, and Slender-tailed. Dinner and overnight at Pakuba Safari Lodge or similar.

Day 6: Birding to Fort Portal



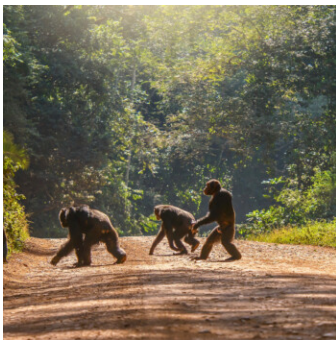
The drive today is long, we shall only have a few birding stops, we drive via Hoima there are a few papyrus swamps where specialties such as White-winged Swamp Warbler and Papyrus Gonolek can be found, while the surrounding scrub may harbour, Double-toothed Barbet, Black-bellied Seedcracker and Grey-headed Oliveback. As we approach Fortportal, we shall have a birding stop to lookout for special species like the Dusky and Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Waller's, Narrow Tailed and Stuhlmann's Starling, African Black Duck, Cassin's Flycatcher, Masked Apalis, White-collared Oliveback, Sabine's and Mottled Spinetail, Cassine's Hawk Eagle, Afep and White-naped Pigeon, Forest and Yellow-mantled Weaver, Sooty Flycatcher, Black Bee-eater, Joyful Greenbul among others. After a full travel day we check in for dinner and overnight at Mountains of the Moon or similar.

Day 7: Birding to Semliki Valley National Park



Semliki is the easternmost extension of West African rainforest and is a biodiversity hotspot. It's the best place in East Africa to see many Guinea-Congo biome endemics. Target species include Congo Snake-Eagle, Bate's Nightjar, Black-throated Coucal, Yellow-throated Cuckoo, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Long-tailed Hawk, Capuchin Babbler, Spot-breasted Ibis, African Piculet, Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill, Black-casqued Hornbill, Zenker's Honeyguide, White-throated Blue Swallow, and many more. Overnight at Chimpanzee Forest Lodge or similar.

Day 8: Kibale National Park - Chimpanzee Tracking and Birding



Kibale is home to 13 species of primates and offers one of the best opportunities for chimp tracking in Africa, with an 80% success rate. Rangers track them by their calls, nests, and tracks. Once found, we'll spend one memorable hour observing their social behaviours. Birding here is also exceptional. We'll search for White-naped Pigeon, Grey Parrot, Black Bee-eater, Hairy-breasted and Eastern Yellow-billed Barbets, Blue-throated Brown and Superb Sunbirds, and most notably, the elusive Green-breasted Pitta—a shy but highly prized target species in this forest. Dinner and overnight at Chimpanzee Forest Lodge or similar.

Days 9-10: Birding to Queen Elizabeth National Park



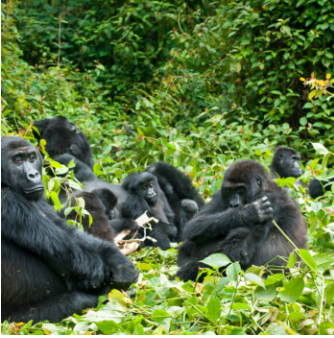
We head southwest to Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda's second-largest protected area. After checking in at Buffalo Safari Lodge, we take a boat cruise along the Kazinga Channel, famous for hosting one of the world's largest hippo populations, Nile Crocodiles, and diverse birdlife. Expect sightings of African Skimmers, Gulls, Terns, Spoonbills, Sandpipers, and other migrants. We will also look for raptors including Martial Eagle, Brown Snake-Eagle, and Rüppell's Griffon Vulture. Evening game drives may reveal species like Eurasian (African) Hoopoe, Green-winged Pytilia, Golden-breasted Bunting, Black Coucal, Moustached Grass-Warbler, Spot-flanked Barbet, Temminck's Courser, Flappet, Rufous-naped, Red-capped and the heavily streaked White-tailed Lark, Kittlitz's Plover, Senegal Lapwing, African Crake, the white face patterned Harlequin Quail, Blue Quail, Red-necked Spurfowl, Mourning Collared-Dove, Fawn-breasted and Crimson-rumped Waxbill, and a range of nightjars including Square-tailed and Pennant-winged. We will also look out for Verreaux's Eagle-Owl. Dinner and overnight Buffalo Safari Lodge or similar.

Day 11: Transfer to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park via Ishasha



After breakfast, we travel to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, birding along en route. We will pass through the Ishasha Sector, famed for its tree-climbing lions and other game. We'll look for grassland birds including the African and Plain-backed Pipits, Flappet and Rufous-naped Larks, African Cuckoo Hawk, Black Cuckoo, White-winged Black Tit, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Blue-naped Mousebird and others. We continue to Ruhija—the top birding site in Africa according to the African Birding Club—we bird the "Neck of Bwindi" looking for key bird species like the Mountain Wagtail, Chinspot Batis, Black-billed Turaco, Fine-banded Woodpecker, Dwarf Honeyguide, Red-tailed Greenbul, and we should come across Bee-eaters including Black Bee-eater and Cinnamon-chested. We will also look for Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Many-colored Bushshrike, Ayres's Hawk-Eagle, Narina Trogon, Honeyguide Greenbul, Red-throated Alethe, Gray Apalis, African Shrike-flycatcher and Red-headed Malimbe. In areas of dry fern vegetation, we expect to find the Dusky Twinspot, Mackinnon's Shrike, Yellow-bellied Waxbill, Black Sawwing, Chubbs' Cisticola. Other birds here include Augur Buzzard, Petit's Cuckooshrike, Pink-footed and Northern Puffback, Red-tailed, Little Grey Greenbuls, Chestnut-throated Apalis, East Yellow White-eye, Dark-capped Bulbul, Yellow-rumped, Speckled and Yellow-throated Tinkerbird, African Stonechat, Grey Cuckoo Shrike, Stripe-breasted Tit, Mountain-masked Apalis, Red-faced Woodland, Mountain Yellow-Warbler, Regal Sunbird, Northern Double-collared Sunbird, Rwenzori Hill Babbler, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher, Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, Yellow-throated Leaflove. Dinner and overnight at Bakiga Lodge or similar.

Days 12-13: Gorilla Tracking and Birding in Bwindi



One of the days we will head out Gorilla tracking. On this day we will have an early breakfast and a briefing about incredible opportunity. Time spent tracking depends on where the gorillas spent the night, mood of the silverback and their feeding range or encounter with other groups which might be wild forcing them to move long distances so be prepared for a whole day activity. Once found you spend an hour with them, seeing these gentle giants interact is awesome and the awe-inspiring wildlife encounter on the African continent and an unforgettable. On our other day here, we will go birding in search for Albertine Rift endemics and forest specialties including Grauer's Broadbill (key target), Black-billed Turaco, Red-faced Woodland Warbler, Stripe-breasted Tit, Rwenzori Batis, Mountain Illadopsis, Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher, Grauer's Warbler, Chestnut-throated Apalis. Before dinner we always drive out to specific secret spots for the Rwenzori Nightjar one of those Endemic to the Albertine Rift Valley. We will have dinner and overnight at Bakiga Lodge or similar.

Days 14-15: Birding from Bwindi to Lake Mburo National Park



We will bird en route to Lake Mburo National Park. As we exit the forest the cultivated areas are good for the Dusky Twinspot, Yellow-bellied, Kandt's and Black-crowned Waxbill, Yellow-crowned Canary, White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher, Streaky Seedeater, Yellow Bishop, Green-headed Sunbird, White-necked Raven, Mountain and Augur Buzzard. We will see family groups and big flocks of the Grey Crowned-Crane the national bird of Uganda. Lake Mburo National Park which is ideal for savannah and acacia birding and the papyrus swamps are good for rarities like the Papyrus Gonolek, White-winged Swamp Warbler, Papyrus Canary, Greater Swamp Warbler, Carruthers's Cisticola among others. Lake Mburo National Park is also a convergence area for the Southern species at the northern limit of their range include the Black-collared, Crested and Red-faced Barbet, Tabora Cisticola, Coqui Francolin, Bare-faced go-away-bird. We will take a boat ride along lake Mburo we will look for the African Finfoot, White-backed and Black-crowned Nigh- Heron, and Giant Kingfisher. While in Lake Mburo we shall look out for mammals like the Zebra, Eland, Topi, Impala, Cape Buffalo, Giraffe, Warthog. A night drive always produces good views of the Black-shouldered and Fiery-necked Nightjar, nocturnal mammals and Bush Babies. Overnight at Rwakobo Rock or similar.

Day 16: Birding Lake Mburo to Entebbe

After breakfast, we bird Lake Mburo National Park for key species including Tabora Cisticola, Coqui Francolin, Crested Barbet, Green Woodhoopoe (Red-billed), Thick-billed Cuckoo, Brubru, Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike. As we exit the park, we may find Brown-chested Lapwing and Slate-colored Boubou before continuing to Entebbe. Dinner and overnight at Papyrus Guest House or similar.

Day 17: Departure

Our tour concludes after breakfast. You can depart anytime today.

What to Expect

Overview

On our Uganda birding tour, we often begin birding early in the morning, usually having breakfast before dawn. Days will usually start at first light to catch activity in the morning before the day warms up and activity slows down. We may rest for a mid-day 'siesta' on some days. We lunch at a local restaurant/lodge or take a picnic lunch into the field. During leisurely dinners we discuss the day's activities and review the day's list of sightings, and make plans for the next day.

Accommodations

We stay in mostly good quality accommodations, often in excellent birding localities; accommodations may include lodges, guest houses, or "tented camps"; all are comfortable, pleasant and safe.

Driving

We will be travelling in a Landcruiser with pop-up roof that seats 8 people including the driver. Roads are good for the most part, a little rough in some areas. There will be long drives on some days as we travel between sites.

Walking

The Gorilla trekking in the Bwindi-Impenetrable Forest is challenging and a good level of fitness is required. The trek could take anywhere from a few hours to 8 hours and the trails are steep with thick vegetation, and can be slippery and muddy. The service of local guides are included in the Gorilla trek. Please be advised that there is no guarantee of success although the Gorillas are rarely missed. Chimpanzee trekking and looking for Green-breasted Pitta can also involve quite a lot of walking. All are welcome to opt out of activities if not manageable. You will need to confirm whether you are going to do the gorilla and chimpanzee treks when you book on the tour.

Climate

Most days will be warm or hot, dry and sunny; cloudy weather are to be expected and there will likely be rain. At higher elevations temperatures can be cool. Occasionally humidity is an inconvenience.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All meals and bottled water, soft drinks
- All accommodation
- All ground transportation in 4WD vehicle with a professional bird/driver guide
- One EET guide plus a local guide with 4 - 12 participants
- All park, conservation and entrance fees
- Boat rides
- One Gorilla Permit
- One Chimp permit
- One Rhino Permit
- Gratuities to local drivers

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to and from Entebbe
- Travel Insurance
- Visa fee
- Drinks
- Other items of a personal nature
- Optional gratuities to main guide
- Alcoholic beverages

