

Zambia – pittas, barbets, bats, and rare antelope.

November 18 – December 4, 2019. **373 bird species** seen + 15-20 heard-only. **41 mammal species** seen.

Highest diversity days: 155 bird + 15 mammal species at Lochinvar + Nkanga on 11/ 21 and 131 bird + 12 mammal sp. Nkanga 11/22.



Organizer: Nate Dias <https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshorebirder2/> https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyYL-LT3VD8wBHAF6NHlibQ/videos?view_as=subscriber/

Agent: Roy Glasspool at Bedrock Africa <http://bedrockafrica.com/> **Guide:** Kyle Branch <https://tuskandmane.com/>

Special thanks to Rory MacDougall for hosting and stellar guiding in the Choma area and Lochinvar NP.

Bird highlights: African Pitta, Slaty Egret, Chaplin's Barbet, Bar-winged Weaver, Bocage's Akalat, Black-necked Eremomela, African Broadbill (displaying male), Woolly-necked Stork, Dwarf Bittern, Rufous-bellied Heron (2 fighting), Crowned Eagle, Lesser Jacana, African Pygmy Goose, Racket-tailed Roller, Half-collared Kingfisher, Böhm's Bee-eater, Rufous-bellied Tit, Eastern Nicator, Purple-throated Cuckoo shrike, Anchieta's Sunbird, Locust Finch, Carmine Bee-eater colony, 5 Roller species: Purple, Racket-tailed, Lilac-breasted, European & Broad-billed.

Mammal highlights: Lord Derby's Anomalure (two interacting and posing), Sitatunga, Serval cat, African Bush Elephant (multiple nursing calves), Kafue Lechwe, Black Lechwe, Sable Antelope, millions of Straw-coloured Fruit Bats, 3 baboon species, Rump-spotted Blue Monkey, Sharpe's Grysbok.



Flap-necked Chameleon – Mutinondo Wilderness

The origin for this Zambia birding and mammal safari was a discussion with my friend Rob Barnes from the U.K. about Barbets. Rob has seen a large percentage of the African barbets and we got to talking about rare ones and ones he had yet to see. He expected to fill some of his barbet gaps on a February 2019 Ghana trip; after that, Zambia seemed the most promising. Rob and I both still needed Chaplin's (Zambian), Miombo Pied, Whyte's and Anchieta's Barbets. The topic of Zambia reminded us that African Pitta has been fairly reliable the past few years in certain thickets in the Zambezi valley. Pittas display from late November - early December which is also a great time to see the multi-million fruit bat migration at Kasanka National Park. Thus, a plan began to take shape. We considered adding a visit to Liuwa Plain National Park but at our late planning date, could not get a quorum of people interested in J. & M.'s rather pricey mobile camp. We were also interested in the Mwinilunga area, but conditions were too wet that late in November. Most people we knew already had plans by then, but my friend and fellow safari enthusiast Roger Smith was also excited to come. The three of us joined Kyle in a rented Toyota Prado 4x4 SUV for a 16-day adventure.



Mutinondo Wilderness view from an inselberg.

Nov 18 - Arrive in Livingstone, check into the Avani, afternoon birding in Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park around Victoria Falls.
Nov 19 – Day trip to Machile Important Bird Area to look for endemic Black-Cheeked Lovebirds
Nov 20 - Transfer to Masuku Lodge, Nkanga River Conservation Area.
Nov 21 - Nkanga River Conservation Area all day.
Nov 22 - Lochinvar National Park day trip, night drive in Nkanga River Conservation Area.
Nov 23 - Transfer Masuku Lodge to Forest Inn. Afternoon birding + evening Lord Derby’s Anomalures.
Nov 24 – Morning birding at Forest Inn then transfer to Kasanka National Park.
Nov 25 - Kasanka NP – predawn night drive and all-day excursions.
Nov 26 - Bangweulu Wetlands day trip.
Nov 27 – Kasanka NP morning then transfer to Mutinondo Wilderness.
Nov 28 - Mutinondo Wilderness.
Nov 29 – Morning birding in Mutinondo Wilderness then transfer to Wright House Farm.
Nov 30 – Early morning transfer to a Zambezi Valley river lodge, afternoon pitta time.
Dec 01 – Early morning pitta time, late morning head to adjacent Chiawa GMA for an all-day game drive.
Dec 02 – Morning boat cruise on Kafue and Zambezi rivers, transfer to Siavonga.
Dec 03 – Morning birding near Siavonga then transfer to Lusaka.
Dec 04 – Morning birding on the grounds of the Cresta Golf View hotel, afternoon departure Lusaka Airport.

Roy Glasspool at Bedrock Africa offered us a visit to the Bangweulu Wetlands while staying in Kasanka National Park - if rains had not rendered access roads impassable. We agreed – a Shoebill might turn out to be accessible, and we all wanted to see Black Lechwe antelope (essentially endemic to Bangweulu). And Kyle outdid himself by putting together a spur-of-the-moment game drive into Chiawa GMA, after our early success with the Pitta. This hunting block, now photographic reserve, borders Lower Zambezi National Park to the southwest, has Zambezi River frontage and has excellent mammals and birding. We were across the Zambezi river from Mana Pools National Park in Zimbabwe at certain times. I cannot say enough good things about Bedrock Africa and Kyle Branch of Tusk and Mane. They are highly skilled and attentive to detail, ultra-competent and know everybody. Masuku Lodge is a joy to visit - I could stay there for months happily. We had a great time on this safari - more than one great night drive, a superb boat ride, hardy slogs through dambos and mushitu thickets. Mutinondo Wilderness and Kasanka NP are incredible places.

Nov. 18

Rob, Roger, and I met for breakfast at the *Mugg and Bean* in Johannesburg Airport, before boarding our flight to Livingstone. After collecting our checked luggage, we met our driver and guide Kyle Branch. We stopped at a Shoprite supermarket for a few supplies and then checked in at the Avani hotel in Livingstone. After dumping our bags in our rooms we went for a walk, birding in the adjacent Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park on the way to Victoria Falls viewpoints (admission is free for guests of the Avani). It was raining intermittently, so I left my camera gear in the room and enjoyed birding without it. Of course, since I did not have a camera, **Schalow’s Turacos** and a Red-chested Cuckoo posed for us out in the open. Other bird sightings included a pair of White-browed Robin-chats nesting in a tree cavity right next to a path, Black-collared Barbet, Gray-backed Camaroptera, Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike, African Golden Oriole, African Paradise Flycatcher, Terrestrial Brownbul, Violet-backed Starling, Amethyst Sunbird, Jameson’s Firefinch, Bearded Scrub-Robin, Common Sandpiper, Black Kite, Blue Waxbill, and several more. Victoria Falls were not very impressive – in addition to it being the end of the dry season / beginning of the green season, there had been a drought that lowered the water levels even more. Still, we were able to see a little of the “smoke that thunders”.



Nov. 19

We rose early, collected coffee + packed breakfast + lunch and departed at 5am for Machile IBA. Here we hoped to see Black-cheeked Lovebird, a Zambian endemic. Just after leaving Livingstone, while driving through Mosi-oa-Tuna National Park, in the dim predawn light four bachelor male **African Bush Elephants** approached the road ahead of us. Kyle stopped, put on his hazard lights to warn other drivers and we watched them cross. Photo courtesy of Rob Barnes.



The largest had a tracking collar and was missing the tip of one tusk. Not long afterward, we saw a Southern Giraffe and then a Western Banded Snake-Eagle perched in a roadside tree.



Our final brief stop before pressing on in earnest was for a group of three **Southern Ground Hornbills** who unfortunately hustled away rather quickly. Then we turned north, and the road quickly began to deteriorate. Before long, the road consisted of less and less asphalt and more dirt and potholes. Eventually we turned off to the east on a dirt road through the Zambian outback. The habitat was mopane forest interspersed with grasslands and floodplains. We had good birding and stopped in nice habitat to get out and listen for Lovebirds. Tawny-flanked Prinias were common, Orange-breasted Bush-shrikes called at regular intervals, Amethyst Sunbirds, Southern Carmine + Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters, Black Cuckoo-Shrikes, Chinspot Batis, and Diederik's Cuckoos constantly saying "dee-dee-dee-diederik". Then a nice little bird party with Long-billed Crombec, White-bellied Sunbird, Golden-breasted Bunting and Marico Sunbird, plus a Common Tree Squirrel. Kyle then pointed out several Shovel-nosed Dung Beetles, Southern Black Tits and then we had a flock of Retz's Helmet-Shrikes pass through noisily. Then we had good but brief looks at Levillant's Cuckoo that flushed from a bush by the road. We also had a few sightings of Black-faced Vervet monkeys.

Despite recent light rain things were very dry. The usual puddles/pools where the Lovebirds congregate were dry and the areas around them were devoid of Lovebirds. At one point we heard distant calls but could not locate them. So, we proceeded further towards the Machile riverbed - which we hoped would hold enough water to attract parrots. Everywhere we saw was dry – long story short, we struck out on the Black-cheeked Lovebirds. But we enjoyed our outing and glimpses of village life in Machile IBA.

On the way back we enjoyed more good birding including a **Narina Trogon** and just before dark, an encounter with the same four elephants from that morning! They were crossing the road in the opposite direction, led by the collared bull with the missing point of one tusk.

Nov. 20

After a 6am coffee and muffin, we spent a couple of hours birding the grounds and ponds of the Avani resort then the forested sections of Mosi-oa-Tunya before a last look at the falls. Then a sit-down breakfast that was a combination of buffet and made-to-order. We were tarrying a bit since Kyle had sent the vehicle back for some new shock absorbers the evening before. The Avani was quite alright as far as somewhere to stay in Livingstone. If you are after air-conditioned rooms convenient to the falls with some birding possibilities it is the place for you. If you are after immersion in wildlife and nature, perhaps a bush camp or river lodge not far away.

On the two-hour drive to Masuku Lodge, we were sad to see a road-killed Pennant-winged Nightjar. Here is a photo with Kyle's foot for a size comparison.



When we arrived at Nkanga River Conservation Area, rather than rush to Masuku Lodge we took a slow-paced game drive. The NRCA spans three farms which are mostly game farms with some dams, rivers, wetlands and crops as well. The day before had brought the first serious rain in a long time to the area, and it looked as if some light rains had just finished that morning. We could see termite and ant emergences in progress - clouds of winged insects were swarming everywhere. As expected, many birds and other animals were stuffing their faces with the sudden insect bounty. The Slender Mongoose we soon sighted gave us the usual "rear looks" as it bounded away. At a crossroads we found a nice bird party that included Long-tailed Paradise Whydahs, Pin-tailed Whydahs, Little Bee-eaters, Grey Go-away Birds, Diederik Cuckoo, waxbills and Red Quelea. We also enjoyed multiple Common Duiker sightings, a small troop of Chacma Baboons and two Bushbuck, a male and a female.

As we pulled up to the parking area at Masuku Lodge, we were greeted by two amicable Labrador Retrievers. This is always a good indication in my experience. We were greeted by Rory McDougall the owner, co-founder of Bedrock Africa, and safari guide of great renown. Rory kindly gave Roger and me each our own chalet, even though we had booked under the shared plan. He said "they are available throughout your stay, so why not?".

Here is a view of one of the chalets. Inside mine was a large king-sized bed and a large bunkbed (both with mosquito nets), as well as a desk and chair, large bathroom with tub and shower, etc. It has a nice table and chairs on the front porch - a great place for a morning cup of coffee and watching birds and wildlife.



Lunch was very tasty and really hit the spot; afterwards we took a little time to visit our rooms and get ready for the afternoon game + birding drive. We were lucky to be guided by the dynamic duo of Kyle and Rory - not much got past those two! As soon as the drive began, we passed a pair of Wattled Lapwings that have a territory around the dam behind Masuku Lodge's grounds.

* If you look closely at the following photos, you can see the Wattled Lapwing was showing the tip of a "wing blade" sticking out where the forewing meets the breast when folded. Wing blades are modified bone projections - a flat and sharp 'spur' that some Jacanas and Plovers and Lapwings have. These spurs can be used as weapons.



At a rocky stream crossing, we saw some Bush Hyrax sitting on rocks and hiding in the brush. And as our game drive continued, we enjoyed more Common Duikers, some common birds like Bearded Woodpecker, and then Rory and Kyle spotted some **Racket-tailed Rollers**! This was a life bird for Roger and me and we all wanted to get some photos of this alluring species.



On our way to look for Chaplin's Barbets we passed through a grassland area with lots of game - more Common Duikers, a couple of dozen Puku, several Tsessebe and a few Oribi as well. At a little dam, we enjoyed some shorebirds - 2 Greenshank, three Wood Sandpipers and more Wattled Lapwings. Then we came upon a couple of Magpie Shrikes - I think they are handsome creatures.



After enjoying more birds and a Monitor Lizard, we came upon some fig trees that were occupied by Sooty Chats and **CHAPLIN'S BARBETS**. We were glad to see the barbets as they were one of the primary targets for the trip.



Chaplin's (Zambian) Barbet – Nkanga River Conservation Area.

We ended up heading for home after dark, so enjoyed a little night drive. We noted an area where two African Broadbills were calling and working out their territorial boundaries; we decided to visit earlier the next evening to try and see them. On our brief night drive we saw Lesser Galago, Scrub Hare, Bushbuck and Common Duiker, a Sand Frog of some sort and Fiery-necked + Rufous-cheeked Nightjars.



Rufous-cheeked Nightjar

As the sun faded, it was incredible how many flying insects were about. One had to keep one's mouth closed in the open landcruiser and I was glad to have eyeglasses protecting my eyes. We returned to Masuku Lodge for a wonderful dinner. We had to be quick going inside and out, since the omnipresent winged horde was attracted to the lights of the house and wanted to join us inside. But it was more interesting than any kind of bother. We each had some guests inside the chalets that night - termite queens, flying beetles and unidentified insects. But they were well-behaved and did not join us in bed thanks to the mosquito netting. Despite dawdling over breakfast and a couple of hours of road time, we saw 115 bird species and 11 mammal species for the day.

Nov 21

Lochinvar National Park was our destination today; we departed Masuku Lodge after a quick 5am coffee and a muffin. Lochinvar includes some of the southern end of the Kafue Flats - a vast seasonally submerged floodplain straddling the Kafue River. We had multiple reasons to visit Lochinvar and its grasslands + wetlands: herds of the endemic Kafue Lechwe (*Kobus leche kafuensis*), concentrations of ducks + wading birds + shorebirds and target birds like Pygmy Geese, Lesser Jacana, and Slaty Egret to name a few.

The forecast had rain potentially in store and ominous clouds loomed on the horizon towards Lochinvar. We wanted to use Masuku Lodge's open vehicle for our game drive at Lochinvar, but the rain could pose a problem. To solve the dilemma Rory graciously drove the open vehicle (which has a 2-person cab in front) the 1.5 hour trip to Lochinvar, while we rode with Kyle in the Toyota Prado SUV we rented for the safari. When we reached Lochinvar we parked the Prado at the ranger camp beside the lagoon and went exploring in the game drive vehicle.

One of the first birds to welcome us to the park was a Red-naped Lark - its lilting call gave me flashbacks to some happy times in the Maasai Mara. The second bird we saw was a Purple Roller. We saw five Roller species on our Zambia safari: Purple, Racket-tailed, Lilac-breasted, European, and Broad-billed! Then we had a very nice sighting of a critically endangered bird - a White-headed Vulture.



Just afterwards, we saw a Grey Penduline Tit - it was gathering nesting material and working on its nest! The nest was cleverly built, with a false entrance hole covering the real entrance hole to confound predators.



Then in quick succession we had Magpie Shrikes, Grey-crowned Cranes, Broad-billed Roller, Amur Falcon and Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark as well as our first herd of Kafue Lechwe. Unfortunately, the Lechwe were hurrying across the road and into deeper cover.

After more bird and Lechwe sightings we arrived at the ranger camp in a grove of trees by the lagoon. Bundling into the open vehicle, we drove along the lake shore enjoying the scene and spotting birds and lechwe. At our first stop, Roger and I were treated to two "lifers" in the vegetation-covered shallows - four **Pygmy Geese** and two **Lesser Jacanas**! Then we found a spot with lots of birds and some **Kafue Lechwe** herds and stopped for breakfast.



Kafue Lechwe in Lochinvar National Park

I set up my tripod and spotting scope and Kyle used them to call out and show us some nice birds while Rory worked on setting up folding chairs and readying breakfast. As Kyle went to assist Rory, I got down to seriously scoping the shorebirds on the shoreline and small islands. Roger and I had kind of warned Kyle and Rory about my shorebird passion (OK, obsession) and mentioned that I am a professional shorebird surveyor on the side in addition to my "day job". Still, they were a bit surprised as I kept processing ultra-distant flocks and calling out noteworthy birds like Black-tailed Godwit, Gull-billed Tern and others. Eventually I paused for breakfast so as not to be rude and it was well worth it. We all dropped our food and picked up binoculars as a huge flock of Collared Pratincoles zipped back and forth over the water and eventually landed on some flats near a herd of Kafue Lechwe. There must have been 800 Pratincoles at least. I loved watching the Lechwe grazing and resting contentedly amid shorebirds and waterbirds. The scene before us looked for all the world as if it could have been 3,000 years ago.



Birds in view included Red-billed Teal, Hottentot Teal, Yellow-billed Duck, Whiskered + Gull-billed + White-winged Tern, African Jacana, Sacred & Glossy Ibis, Olive Bee-eater, African Fish Eagle, Openbill Stork, Yellow-billed Stork, Little Egret, Intermediate Egret and Great Egret. Shorebirds included Ruff, Marsh Sandpiper, Little Stint, Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Common Ringed-Plover, Common Greenshank and Black-tailed Godwit to name a few.

After breakfast and some more good birding along the lagoon, we proceeded toward drier ground to check out grasslands and woodlands. A nice Black-bellied Bustard put in an appearance near a flock of Crowned Lapwings. Other dry country birds included Temminck's Courser, Common Fiscal, African Stonechat, Grey-rumped Swallow and Dusky Lark. It was good to see Oribi and Warthog and we also spotted Common Duikers.

Soon we came to another wetland area - an expanse of open water with rushes and flooded grasses lining it. There was a large group of egrets and herons including 80-90 Black Herons and smaller numbers of Little Egrets, Cattle Egrets, Squacco Herons and Long-toed + Blacksmith Lapwings. Rory spotted a **SLATY EGRET** - a rare bird in these parts and a highly desired target bird for Roger and me. Rory pointed out how the bird was more blueish in tone, had a noticeably different posture, had a different foraging habit, and lacked the shaggy rear crest of the Black Egrets. We appreciated the valuable lesson on Slaty Egret GISS.



There was a nice flock of Caspian Plovers that we watched while admiring the waterbirds - in the distance there also seemed to be some herders and half-starved cattle inside the park's official boundaries. Eventually we drove to some hot springs in Lochinvar for a late picnic lunch before returning to Masuku Lodge. A Water Monitor played peekaboo with us in the reeds and there were a few shorebirds (Green Sandpipers and a Wood Sand) around the margins of the springs. In a forested area we enjoyed decent looks at a Trumpeter Hornbill.



Impressions of Lochinvar NP: This area is so bountiful and has so much potential and still some mammalian wildlife in significant amounts. There just needs to be enforcement of the rules and probably more + better rules. Rory and others have been working to protect the place for decades and it needs an NGO or other partner to help turn things around. Some kind of eco-lodge would really help, but the demand is not there yet to keep one afloat - the old dilemma. Birdwatch Zambia has taken an interest and helped organize well-researched and executed "invasive Mimosa eradication" sessions to restore grasslands for the Lechwe and other grazers. It's a hard choice but I agree that sometimes targeted use of benign herbicides is warranted in the course of invasive species control.

We arrived back at Masuku Lodge with a fair amount of daylight remaining. After a short break, we planned to reassemble in the car park to board the game drive vehicle. We all wanted to look for the African Broadbills we had heard the night before, as well as do a more in-depth night drive. I forgot to mention that we had seen an active Aardvark burrow the previous afternoon so that was also on the itinerary.

At 5:50pm while Kyle and I waited for the others, we had two **Narina Trogons** vocalizing and flitting around the parking area! When everyone arrived, we all marveled and tried to get decent photos despite the cloud-dispersed light and overhead angle.



As we passed the Wattled Lapwings' dam, a pair of African Hoopoes had a fight that ended with them falling to the ground. Soon afterwards a family of Banded Mongoose watched us from a termite mound. Then we had a Crowned Hornbill and birds like Walberg's Eagle and Lizard Buzzard while searching in vain for Miombo Pied Barbets, another target bird.

At 6:20 we were at the **African Broadbill** spot with one of the birds calling and presumably displaying. The Broadbill was in very dense woodland with a thick understory, near a watercourse. "Riverine thicket" I suppose would be the correct term. I had to leave my tripod on the road as we twisted and burrowed along behind Kyle in a cautious approach to the bird. So the video I shot was intolerably shaky and the photos very grainy from the super-high ISO required after sundown in the dark woodland. Nevertheless, it was a thrilling experience and a new bird for me. I had not known to reasonably expect African Broadbill - much less a displaying male - when planning this safari.



We were elated after the Broadbill encounter and proceeded on a Night Drive with Kyle driving and (very responsibly) spotlighting. We saw multiple Bushbuck and Common Duikers as well as several scrub hares. Then we saw a small-to-medium sized mammal sitting on a tree-dotted termite mound. Looking through binoculars we could see it had small, pointed ears and seemed to be spotted. We all realized it was a **Serval**! It let us get medium distance and decided to slink down the mound and pace off through a grassy area. I estimate we had it in sight for 3-4 minutes all told but I am not good at such estimates after the fact.



Then we waited and watched in silence and in vain for the Aardvark near its burrow. Afterwards we approached to look over the burrow - the Aardvark had urinated beside the burrow and left a pungent odor. Back on the night drive, we came upon a Southern White-faced Owl. It was clutching and eating a very large beetle - that was what was swarming tonight instead of termites and ants. After sighting more Duikers and scrub hares we returned to Masuku Lodge for drinks and dinner after a fabulous day.



Southern White-faced Owl

Nov 22

Our full day in Nkanga River Conservation Area and a neighboring farm was a lot of fun. It started with Peg the Arnot's Chat inside the kitchen and out on the veranda.



Arnot's Chat



Southern Hyliota

Many good birds in the garden greeted us over coffee and on the way to the vehicle. Before long we were seeing Southern Hyliota (a sought-after bird) and Stierling's Wren-Warbler among other goodies. We enjoyed good miombo woodland birding and worked some nice mixed-species flocks. Other highlights included Southern Black Tit chasing Miombo Tit, Neddicky, White-breasted Cuckoo-Shrike, Warthogs, Common Duiker, a bull **Sable Antelope**, and more.



Sable Antelope bull – Nkanga River Conservation Area

After lunch we birded a neighboring farm. A large pond produced 4 new shorebirds: Temminck’s Stint, Kittlitz’s Plover, Three-banded Plover and Water Thick-knee. We skipped a potential night drive to relax over drinks and dinner with Rory and Doris and enjoyed talking about wildlife, conservation and birding.

Masuku Lodge is a wonderful place and Nkanga River Conservation Area is great for birds and mammals. Having Rory the Zambian bird authority there takes things to another level and great places like Lochinvar are in range for day trips. The food is excellent, garden birding tip-top and accommodations just fine.

Nov. 23

Next, we had a lot of driving to reach Kasanka National Park - broken up by a stay at the Forest Inn a few hours' drive north of Lusaka. On the way, north of Lusaka, we stopped for lunch at a great coffee shop and restaurant - the Fig Tree Cafe. It is on some shady grounds by the Great North Road, just south of Kabwe.

We were eager to see if the Lord Derby's Anomalure at Forest Inn (that Kyle knew about) was in residence. He had texted the manager at the Forest Inn and she said yes it was being seen, but there may have been some confusion, so we were not sure. There is also good birding at Forest Inn – the lodge owners have protected 400 acres of miombo forest around the inn.

It was raining when we arrived; the saturated grounds did not seem promising. After checking in, we sat indoors waiting for the rain to end, which it did after an hour. We gathered at the roosting tree of the anomalure and some South African guests joined us after hearing what we were doing. At 6:30pm, as it was getting pretty dark, a **LORD DERBY’S ANOMALURE** popped out of the hole and climbed a short distance up the tree trunk! It sat there and occasionally groomed itself. We were elated that it stayed and gave us good looks. Then a second anomalure popped out of the hole and approached the first one, but the first scurried further up the bole of the tree. We watched them interacting and had about 5 minutes of viewing before they ran down a long limb and launched themselves into the air, gliding over 50 meters to a large tree on the edge of thicker forest. Seeing the anomalures glide off was one of the best experiences of the entire safari.



Video of the Anomalures: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqtbOlK5ji> They seemed like a mother and a nearly-grown offspring, but that is just a hunch.

Nov. 24

The next morning after some coffee and biscuits, we birded the lush miombo forest and adjacent fields and grasslands. There was an intermittent light rain, but we still had decent birding and caught up with a couple of nice mixed-species bird flocks in the miombo woodland. Then we had a late breakfast and set out for Kasanka National Park, arriving around 3pm. It took much longer than normal to drive to Wasa Lodge, because we came across a couple of great mixed-species flocks on the entrance road. We saw African Cuckoo, flocks of Little Swift and a Barred Owlet before crossing the Mulaushi River and adjacent Dambo – where a herd of Puku antelope glanced at us and went back to feeding. Then we came upon a flock that contained some real gems that were hard to choose between at certain points. A couple of Yellow-bellied Hyliotas were flitting about, as were some cooperative **Black-necked Eremomelas**, **Rufous-bellied Tits**, and a **Green-capped Eremomela** among several other birds. Kyle was relieved to get three “miombo specials” / target species right at the beginning.



Yellow-bellied Hyliota



Black-necked Eremomela



Rufous-bellied Tit

Continuing the drive, we enjoyed a Brown-backed Honeybird, Long-tailed Cisticola, Meyer's Parrots and other goodies. After checking in at Wasa Lodge, we sat on the deck with Savanna dry ciders in hand and scoped birds and mammals around Lake Wasa. The highlight was a group of **SITATUNGA** antelope browsing and meandering around the far side of the lake. This shy and elusive antelope was one of our top mammal targets for the trip. We also enjoyed a pod of Hippos in the lake and reckoned they would be strolling around the grounds at night. Bird sightings included White-backed Duck, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Spur-winged Goose, African Fish-eagle, Woolly-necked Stork, Black Crake, Wattled Lapwing, African Jacana, Marsh Sandpiper, Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove, Pied Kingfisher, Eurasian Hobby (chasing the Pied Kingfisher at one point), Marsh Tchagra, African Paradise-flycatcher, Common Bulbul, Grey-backed Camaroptera, and more.

Nov. 25.

Our full day at Kasanka was outstanding. I wish we had planned for another full day there in addition to the Bengweulu day trip. The bats were wonderful as advertised and the birding was also great - the birding really lived up to the big billing.

After rising early (need to be at the bat tower just before first light), we assembled for coffee. I saw that we had an open truck with two rows of bench seats that looked pretty good. The front row was occupied by Kyle and Lewis, the guide supplied by Wasa Lodge. The back row held Roger, Rob, and me. A young driver and a ZAWA scout rode up front in the cab. It was not as crowded as it sounds and I did not feel hampered in my photography while in the vehicle. Sometimes we sat, sometimes we stood.

Sightings began early with an elephant shrew on the "night drive" to the bat hide before sunrise. Kyle said it was a **Chequered Giant Sengi**. I had no idea which species, let alone that it was a sengi versus other small rodent. -- But I am sure Kyle and Lewis (our guide from Wasa Lodge) were correct. Not long afterwards we saw an African Civet that lingered for some distant photos.



African Civet

We parked near our assigned bat observation tower, one of several near Fibwe Forest – the largest patch of mushitu forest in Kasanka. After climbing the tower, we were greeted by an amazing spectacle: a river of bats. A vast swarm of **Straw-coloured Fruit Bats** was flowing through the sky past us, as bats looked for and homed in on roost sites for the day. Some trees were already festooned with bats. Little eddies and backflows of bats swirled back against the main flow, but we never saw any collisions - which was amazing. Photos and video do not do the amazing bat flocks justice. I estimate we saw about a million bats that morning.



Here are a couple of short video clips: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtFh73c9zc0> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mtp_9jR62oU

Just after leaving the bat hide, around 6:30am we got into a nice bunch of birds. Black Coucals sat on top of bushes, Broad-billed Rollers sat up and vocalized, Coppery-tailed Coucals flew past, and multiple species of Cisticolas foraged and vocalized from the tops of bushes.



Coppery-tailed_Coucal

On our way to look for Sitatunga antelope, we saw Ross's Turacos, Eurasian Hobby, Black-backed Barbets, Little Swifts, and Woolly-necked Storks and more. Around 7:00am under somewhat cloudy skies we reached a marshy area that had several Sitatungas grazing in a clearing of low-cropped grass. They drifted in and out of the clearing from the cover of tall surrounding reeds. We were able to observe male, female and young Sitatungas relaxed and out in the open - a rare privilege for this shy and elusive species.



Shortly after the Sitatunga encounter we had a nice sit with a female Sitatunga grazing contentedly by the road beside a small bridge. Then two male Puku fighting:



On the way to a dambo to look for Wattled Cranes we saw Malbrouk's Vervets, White-fronted Bee-eater, African Moustached Warbler, Marsh Tchagra, and more. At the dambo, we spotted two adult **WATTLED CRANES** and their juvenile offspring. It was great to see these critically endangered birds reproducing successfully.



We had one of the best experiences of the safari in a riverine forest beside the Kasanka River and adjacent dambo, in an area near pontoon camp. When we arrived at the parking area, Lewis and the ZAWA scout (I never got his name) went into the woods along a trail upstream towards Pontoon Camp. They were going to make sure it was safe and keep an eye out for roosting Pel's Fishing Owl. Lewis and the scout returned with no Pel's found and not much seen. Kyle suggested going downstream, off-trail through some thick riverine forest, trying for a bird party and keeping an eye out for Pel's. So we walked, at times burrowing, in the thick riverine forest beside the Kasanka River looking for Pel's Fishing-Owl and other treats. Kyle found a fantastic bird party with multiple **Böhm's bee-eaters**, **Purple-throated Cuckoo-Shrikes**, an **Olive Woodpecker**, Narina Trogon, Black Wattle-eyes, Dark-backed Weaver, as well as African Oriole, Orange-breasted Bush-shrikes and other more common species.



Riverine forest next to Kasanka River



Böhm's Bee-eater



Purple-throated Cuckooshrike

We did not find a Pel's Fishing Owl but we were still thrilled at our haul. Next, we drove to some extensive miombo woods for a bush walk. After a slow time with few birds or other critters, we had an encounter with some elephants. We were a good distance away from the vehicle when an elephant we had vaguely been aware of at long distance across the road suddenly loomed close in thick woods right beside us. We backed up slowly and walked up a huge termite mound for safety and to look things over. But rather than possibly letting us enjoy a walk-by, the scout conspicuously cocked his AK-47 type rifle and made a loud click-clack. This caused the elephant to flee, poor thing. It seemed more a first reflex rather than last resort on the part of the scout. We were very disappointed - Kyle and I thought we were going to have a nice encounter as the elephant passed us but the ZAWA game scout overreacted and spoiled things.



African Bush Elephant at close range while we were on foot



Yellow House Bat at Wasa Lodge (photo by Rob Barnes)

Next, we headed to a picnic area for lunch with the bird highlight being a **Green-headed Sunbird**. Afterwards we proceeded to Luwombwa Lodge and the dilapidated pontoon river crossing, where we saw some nice birds. Around 1pm we started angling towards Wasa Lodge due to some serious looking storm squalls moving in our direction. We stopped to look at Kasanka's lone Cape Buffalo herd. Then in a drying patch of road along a dambo, we had to linger as long as a pair of **Locust Finches** showed themselves! The 'Locust Finches in-the-open' sighting was one of our best that day, despite the dark clouds and poor light.



We asked the driver to pick up the pace to beat the storm to Wasa Lodge. We arrived in the nick of time and dashed from the vehicle as a pelting rain began. The storm was chilly and due to my cold virus, I decided against going back out that afternoon and evening with bad weather all around. I stayed at Wasa Lodge, sharing my spotting scope and tripod and chatting with a sharp young guide named Simon. Simon knew all about birds and especially Kinda Baboons since he had worked for some Kinda researchers for a year and a half. While we were birding, Simon told me about two Senegal Lapwings raising chicks as well as a herd of Sable Antelope near the airstrip at the edge of Chikufwe Plain. The highlights of our birding session were a pair of **Lesser Jacanas** and a Eurasian Hobby that kept chasing an irritated Pied Kingfisher. Kyle, Rob and Roger had another nice bat viewing and good birding as well. At the bar before dinner, I traded notes with a BBC film crew. They were in Kasanka working on an upcoming documentary; their goal over the next several days was to film raptors hunting and hopefully preying upon fruit bats. After dinner we huddled with the head guide at Wasa and talked about conditions on the road to Bangweulu Wetlands. He said he heard that morning things were OK, so we decided to go for it early the next morning.

Nov. 26

At 3:45am we gathered over coffee in Wasa Lodge before the long drive to Chikuni Research Post in Bangweulu Wetlands, where we would inquire about current status of the Shoebill before finalizing our plans. The round-trip distance & time was a bit daunting. The head guide said that it takes almost five hours to drive from Wasa to Bangweulu, but "knowing how you drive Kyle, four hours". We all had a good laugh, knowing exactly what he meant - safe with a brisk pace.

I had long wanted to visit Bangweulu Wetlands, so an early rise was no problem. When we reached the highway, we turned north but soon turned off to the east at Namilika Kawa onto a dirt road. We drove for quite a while, through miombo forests of varying quality. We ran into a truck with African Parks staff inside - they had just come from Chikuni and reported the roads were passable. Hooray! We drove on and on through miombo woodland and suddenly someone (Kyle I think) spotted a **DWARF BITTERN** perched on a log lying on the ground near the road! Kyle deftly stopped beside the bird without much disturbance. We kept quiet and tried to move slowly if at all. The bittern stayed frozen, confident its camouflage would conceal it. The bird was too close for my 400mm lens to focus on, so I slowly turned and dug another camera + lens from my bag in the pile of luggage behind us. It was a 100-400 mm zoom lens on a Canon 7DmkII - not the best low-light choice but all I could use under the circumstances. The early hour and cloudy conditions did not help the photography efforts.



Dwarf Bittern in miombo forest on the road to Bangweulu Wetlands

The tiny bittern held fast as we drove off and we were relieved not to have flushed it. We did not see it on our return. Eventually we passed lake Waka Waka and then turned left (north) driving for many miles past scattered tiny villages, on causeways across dambos, and eventually reached the somewhat larger village of Chiundaponde. We passed through Chiundaponde, bearing right and crossing the Moboshi River, then turned left (north) onto a much smaller track. Within 100 yards or so, we came to an official looking Bangweulu Wetlands gate and scout outpost where Kyle checked in and asked after current road conditions in various areas. The young female scout was very helpful and radioed ahead to the manager of the research camp that we would be interested in a brief chat.

I think the gate was a little under two hours' drive from Lake Waka Waka, which was around an hour from Wasa Lodge. After the gate we drove another hour or so and made a quick stop at the end of Lewis' driveway. Several children (he said only three were his) ran to see him while cheering and shrieking. Lewis was not scheduled to return home for another six weeks and wanted to make a quick stop to drop off some earnings with his wife. How could we refuse? Eventually we reached a road that led left towards Nsobe Campsite; then the miombo woodlands ended and a vast grassy floodplain began. We drove on, enjoying huge flocks of Abdim's Storks - scattered on the ground but even more soaring on thermals along with a few vultures. Then we saw some skittish Burchell's Zebras and then distant herds of **Black Lechwe**. Despite the heat shimmer it was very good viewing of hundreds of Lechwe. They were not bunches in dense herds - sort of scattered linear groups. We saw thousands of Lechwe all told during the day - difficult to say how many, since we backtracked and they moved around a lot.



Black Lechwe buck, Bangweulu Wetlands



Black Lechwe herd

Arriving at Chikuni Research Post, we were greeted by the manager, who of course knew Kyle and was a friend of Lewis'. He said it was another couple hours' journey to the only Shoebill that was still within striking distance of Chikuni. It seemed a Shoebill chase would require immediate departure for uncertain chances. So, we decided to stick with the proverbial bird in hand and stay with the herds of Lechwe, Tsessebe and other grazers and try to plug some gaps in our bird list.

The floodplains at Bangweulu are interesting. Much of them are a treeless grassy expanse. But a lot of game favored around areas of slightly higher ground dotted with small round thickets of trees. Some of these small thickets were very birdy. Around the margins of the open grasslands, we saw some large dense herds of Tsessebe with many youngsters, but they did not allow a close approach and we did not press things for fear of spooking them. There were also some African Savanna Buffalo - on the range map of Buffalo the green dot in northern Zambia is the greater Bangweulu population. A Side-striped Jackal did not like the looks of us and ran quickly away but the Hooded Vulture and Lappet-Faced Vultures we saw did not seem to mind us. We made a quick stop for lunch in the shade of a grove of trees on slightly higher ground, where an Icterine Warbler was foraging. Then Lewis showed us how to drive along the edges of the wetter marsh and we had some nice birding with **Katanga Masked Weaver**, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Swamp Flycatcher, Hartlaub's Babbler, Fulleborne's Longclaw, Marsh

Widowbird, Malachite Kingfisher, Yellow Wagtail, Common Waxbill, Brown Firefinch, Lanner Falcon, and more. Shorebirds included Temminck's Courser, Kittlitz's Plover, Ruff, Common Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper. There were trenches and short earthworks everywhere that we had to meander around. We gathered from Lewis it was to corral fish when high waters were receding.

Then sadly it was time to head for home, especially since some ominous clouds were building over our return path. After leaving the floodplain, on a finger of higher ground jutting out into the lowlands, the first village we reached was Ngungwa which immediately blended into Muwele. They were essentially linear, like communities on barrier islands are arranged. Here is an iPhone video of the village: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKB5BEvzgww> Soon after we left the Bangweulu gate, the skies opened and a ferocious rain started. A stream formed in the road, which was lower than the surrounding woodlands. The water was running downhill, back towards Bangweulu. We were driving uphill on a submerged clay road, against the current but Kyle did admirably at the wheel.



Bangweulu road

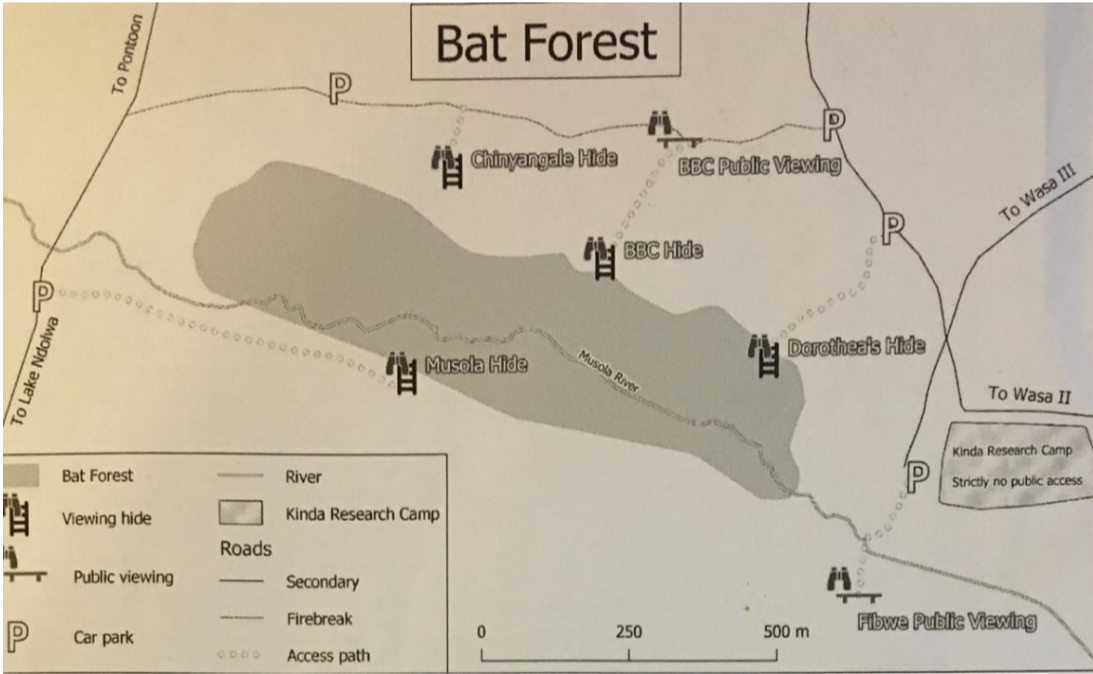
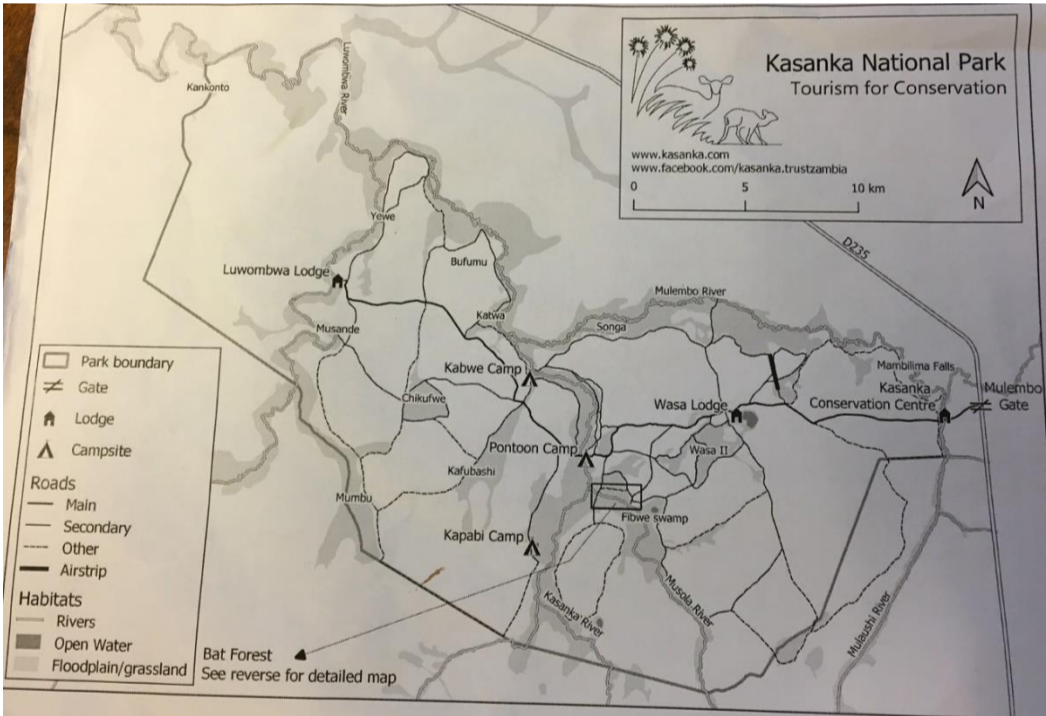


BBC film crew's data rig

Even though it was a long drive, we had a grand time at Bangweulu Wetlands and I would like to visit again someday. It would be nice to be there at first light and be able to have good light before the heat shimmer gets ripping. We arrived back at Wasa and the film crew was still there, judging by their drive arrays on the charging table in the corner. They were using 4-disk Areca arrays.

Nov. 27

On our last morning at Kasanka National Park we planned to seek Rump-spotted Blue Monkeys and other primates, then check near the airstrip for the herd of Sable Antelope that had been frequenting the area. We departed well before sunrise again, bound for a mushitu forest not far from Fibwe hide. Here is a front-and-back map and information page they give out at Wasa Lodge and presumably the Conservation Centre and Luwombwa Lodge (it does not appear copyrighted):



Here is an online map of Kasanka NP with a good level of detail: <http://www.mappery.com/map-of/Kasanka-National-Park-Map>

* Click the map to zoom in and press the 'Esc' key on your keyboard to zoom back out.

We had another fleeting sighting of a Chequered Giant Sengi, but alas no photos again. Soon we stopped near a nice mushitu forest at daybreak and saw some Bushbuck, Puku, a Lanner Falcon and two Wahlberg's Eagles chasing each other. And we also saw an amazing river of bats! It was flowing at a very constant rate. Though sometimes partly obscured by trees in front of us, it was a mind-blowing amount of biomass in the air. It was nice to be a little more distant than in the bat hides; one gets more sense of scale without being in the middle of an uncountable swarm.



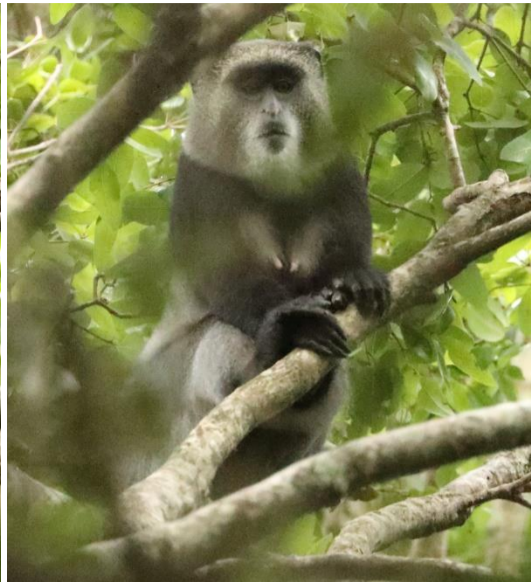
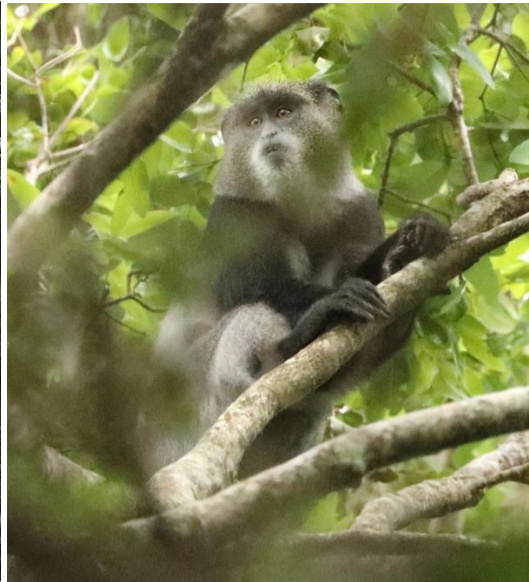
If you look at each photo, do an experiment where you count the number of bats top to bottom in roughly single-bat vertical line samples. I did this and average between 25 and 30 bats per top-to-bottom "slice". Counting the total slices in the photos, I get around 100 slices in the photos. 25 bats per slice and 100 slices would seem to make 2500 bats in the single telephoto shot (fairly narrow field of view). This river of bats was flowing left-to-right at a rate at which bats would disappear from the right of the frame about five seconds after they entered in the left of the frame. So if a sample is roughly 2500 bats per 5 seconds, that is 500

bats per second flowing past. If the river flowed relatively constantly for an hour that would be 1,800,000 bats passing by. Which does not sound far-fetched. There seem to be a handful of such rivers feeding into the Kasanka "Bat Forest" each morning and the hides are positioned to sample the different "rivers".

Despite our hopes, neither Lanner Falcons nor any other raptors took after the bat flocks in our presence. After enjoying the bat river, we proceeded slowly and quietly into some nice mushitu that Lewis indicated was good for Blue Monkeys.



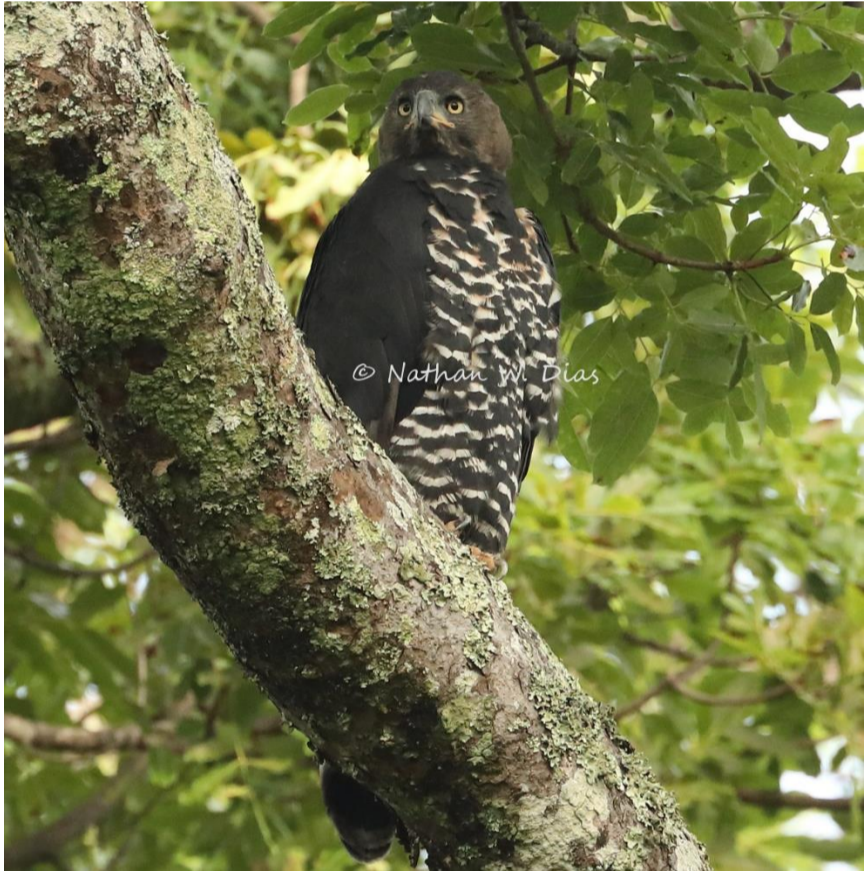
Mushitu Forest near Fibwe Hide



Rump-spotted Blue Monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis opisthoticus*)

Soon we came upon a small group of **Rump-spotted Blue Monkeys** that included a mother and youngster - somewhat older than an infant but still quite young. The mother appeared to still be lactating. It was dim light under the canopy early on a cloudy day and we had better looks than photos.

The next patch of dense forest produced good looks at Böhm's bee-eater, as well as a small flock of Meyer's Parrots and Malbrouk Monkeys. The Malbrouk Monkeys were fairly close but backlit. We walked down a semi-trail in mature mushitu near Fibwe hide and suddenly through a tiny window lined up in the foliage, I spotted a **CROWNED EAGLE** perched high in a tree. Kyle made me laugh by saying "Sherbet, how did you spot that?" I replied that even a blind hog finds a root occasionally as the old saying goes. That turned into a theme the rest of the safari with us "blind hogs" trying to spot things before Kyle did. As we moved farther down the trail, eventually we got a clear view of the eagle.



Crowned Eagle in Kasanka National Park

After the long and good Crowned Eagle sighting, my "day was made" but the good birding continued. We had a nice flock of Sunbirds behind a scout camp - Amethyst, Variable, Collared and Copper all fed in the trees and chased each other, not holding still for an instant. And we had a flock of Green Twinspots (several females and a male) playing peekaboo and foraging on the ground at the edge of the woods.



Copper Sunbird (male showing its throat)



Green Twinspot (adult male)



Black-backed Barbet

Then at the next stop, in the ecotome beside Dorothea's Hide we had more nice sightings including Pale-billed Hornbill, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Black-backed Barbet, Common Buzzard, an interesting Mantis, and a weaver nest that allowed close inspection. After our mushitu primate search and birding, we cruised Chikufwe Plain looking for the herd of Sable and the Senegal Lapwings with chicks. Unfortunately, we found neither and had to return to Wasa Lodge to check out. On the way we saw a large troop of Kinda Baboons in some verdant miombo woodlands. One pregnant female lingered and gave us a good photo opportunity.

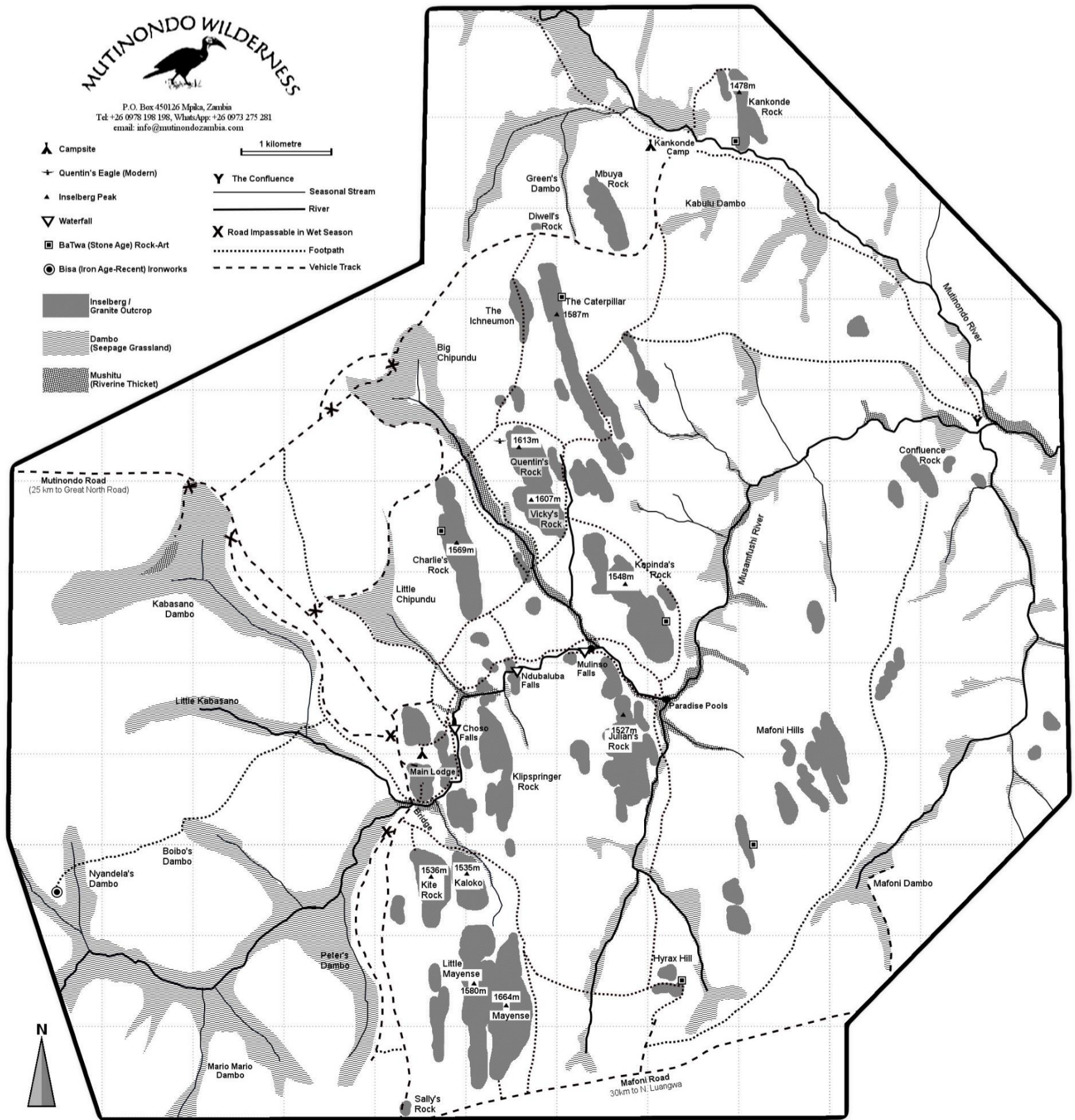


Kinda Baboon (pregnant female) – Kasanka NP

Kasanka National Park produced well for us, both for mammals and birds. I recommend staying at least three nights - or even four if you do a day trip to Bangweulu. I would love to be able to spend a week there and properly look through its varied habitats. Kasanka is certainly more affordable than Zambia's "Big Five" national parks. If you drive there, the expense is in terms of time.

One bird we were still missing was Miombo Pied Barbet - as well as the much more difficult Whyte's Barbet and Anchieta's Barbet. In retrospect, the latter two may be more difficult in Zambia than we first hoped. It could have been that Miombo Pied Barbets were nesting during our visit and keeping a low profile. Perhaps that, plus the (post-drought) obscene glut of fruit we had been seeing - waterberry, Masuku (wild loquat), figs galore, and others - must make for very short foraging runs to feed the nestlings. We hoped to cure our barbet deficiency at our next stop, the fabulous Mutinondo Wilderness.

Driving from Kasanka to Mutinondo, we saw many people selling mushrooms by the side of the road. Some of them were Termitomyces titanicus - the largest edible mushroom in the world. Some vendors had little roadside stands and some simply stood by the road, holding the mushrooms over their head like umbrellas when traffic approached. We saw cars and truckers pulling over and purchasing the sizeable fungi. Driving into Mutinondo on the entrance road, we saw how large and pristine this wilderness area is. Most of the entrance road traverses quality miombo habitat - birds like Groundscraper Thrush, White-crested Helmet-Shrikes, and others put in appearances despite the midday hour. Mutinondo is such an amazing place - hard to get one's head around. Here is a map:



When we arrived at the reception area of the lodge, William the manager greeted us. He also helped us with bird and mammal information and suggested routes, which I scribbled furiously on a printout of the above map. William's specialty / area of study was insects; none of our questions went unanswered regarding insecta. He advised us to look for blooming mistletoe in the trees, stake it out, and eventually Anchieta's Sunbird and others should be in attendance. Unfortunately, blooming mistletoe was difficult to find our entire stay. Too much fruit and not enough flowers turned out to be the challenge we faced.

We were also delighted to meet Mike, the owner who is an expat from the United Kingdom. He is a superb naturalist and shared a lot of knowledge with us about birds, mammals, plants, reptiles and insects. He introduced us to multiple edible plants - one was a tasty fruit that resembled a small plum but tasted like a cranberry. We also met some interesting fellow guests, one of whom was working with Mike's wife Lari on reference books to Zambia's plants (one edition will cover monocots, the other dicots).

After checking in, we went birding until sundown on hiking trails along the river at the base of the inselberg. As we set out, we had a brief, very backlit look at a male **Anchieta's Sunbird** near the open dining area. In retrospect, we foolishly left it to go downhill towards the river in search of more of them. But other than an "iffy" sighting of a female Anchieta's Sunbird, that was it for this species - which should be plentiful and much in evidence. That's birding! We also enjoyed Green-headed Sunbird, Black Saw-wing, Red-backed Mannikin and a brief look at a Collared Kingfisher among other birds.

Dinners at Mutinondo were delicious and began with hot soups (I loved adding a dash from the bottle of peppers steeping in sherry). We all enjoyed the varied and excellent conversations. Multiple sets of guests hailed from Germany, the botanist working on his magnum opus was Swedish (and a Fellow at the Kew Botanical Gardens in London), and there was a young couple from London who were hiking across northern Zambia. Kasanka NP was their next destination after Mutinondo.

Mike was a wonderful host who took us on a special walk our last morning. This was a highlight:



Flap-necked Chameleon in Mutinondo Wilderness

Just like Kasanka, I wish we had booked one more night at Mutinondo. Weather was a bit of a challenge and we had to work for our birds, but we found them. I suspect we had bad luck in terms of timing; long story short - our poor luck with Barbets continued. We were still skunked on Miombo Pied Barbet, as well as Anchieta's and Whyte's at the end of our stay. I wish I had taken more photos of wildflowers, trees and other plants at Kasanka and Mutinondo. But it's a balance - taking photos kills your senses and takes your focus off the business at hand - detecting wildlife.

Nov. 28

On our full day at Mutinondo, we started early by driving into the northern edge of Kabasano dambo on a little-used track through deep grass. In the panoramic photo below, I was looking at a stunning Black Coucal in the scope. We saw some Southern Reedbuck but they are very skittish; as soon as we saw them and they saw us, they gave their whistling alarm call and bolted.



We had some nice birds - Miombo Tit, Red-capped Crombec, Marsh Widowbird, Fan-tailed Grassbird (several displaying), Marsh Warbler, Red-faced Cisticola, Fawn-breasted Waxbill, Red-headed Quelea and more. Then we started exploring the adjacent Mushitu forest. A nice party of Black-throated Wattle-eyes were in residence and making their strange vocalizations, but once again they did not provide good photo opportunities. They had been tricky little teasers thus far. We also enjoyed **Bar-throated Apalis**, **Green-headed Sunbirds** and found a pair of **White-tailed Blue Flycatchers**, one of our major targets at Mutinondo. As we watched and followed them, trying for photos in the poor light, Roger spotted their nest! One bird made a couple of quick visits to the nest. Later when we told Mike, he said "oh good, they nested in the same place last year".



Later in the morning we parked in some nice miombo woodland and walked a trail to a nice mushitu forest between the inselbergs called Charlie’s Rock and Vicky’s Rock. When the trail reached a ford over the watercourse, a side trail to the right ran through the riverine forest, paralleling the watercourse. We decided to go straight and explore from the other side, and where the light would be at our backs if looking at the watercourse. We ran into a troop of Yellow Baboons and shot a few photos, but they started coming closer and fanning out, which we worried would put off any birds. So we backtracked, crossed the watercourse, and began down the side trail. Unfortunately, a lot of immature baboons were following us, trying to keep us in sight. And wouldn’t you know it, we heard a Bocage’s Akalat – one of our major targets at Mutinondo. Just as a light rain started, we managed to get enough ahead of the baboons and with judicious playback, Kyle got a nice **Bocage’s Akalat** into view.



Bocage’s Akalat

Back at the lodge, over lunch we enjoyed Striped Pipit, Paradise Flycatcher (a pair was nesting in a tree between reception and Harry's Bar), Kurrichane Thrush, Red-backed Shrike, Amethyst Sunbird, Rufous-bellied Tits, Red-faced Crombecs, Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting, Golden-breasted Bunting and Red-headed Weavers.



Kurrichane Thrush

After lunch we went on a birding hike and had a nice encounter with a flock of Black-throated Wattle-eyes. They are such charming little birds. We also got quick looks at a shy Half-collared Kingfisher near Choso Falls - presumably the same one we saw there the evening before. This is another sought-after bird species that we were glad to see. We had other nice birds including Miombo Wren-Warbler, Collared Flycatcher, Grey-Olive Greenbuls and more.

Nov. 29

The next day, Mike led us on an early morning hike from the lodge along misty dambos, through lush miombo forests and back. Our main goal for the morning was Bar-winged Weaver, another highly sought-after bird and one of Mutinondo's specialties. We had missed them up to that point and hoped to find them in some prime miombo habitat. Fan-tailed Grassbirds were abundant and constantly displaying and singing as we walked along the dambo near the old airstrip. We also enjoyed Variable + Green-headed + Olive Sunbirds, Green Pigeons, Black Cuckoo, Tropical Boubou (several), African Oriole, Fork-tailed Drongo, Gymnogene, Miombo Scrub-Robins and more. We also had an early morning flyby from a **Ross's Turaco**. Then we passed through some drier habitat and almost mopane seeming woodland with concentrations of Acacia trees. There we had some female Sunbirds play peekaboo with us in frustrating fashion.



Ross’s Turaco in light

When we entered a particularly good miombo woodland, Kyle spotted a nice little mixed-species feeding flock. Attending it were two **BAR-WINGED WEAVERS!** They were creeping along branches high in the trees much like a nuthatch or creeper. This behavior made for tricky photography. The bird party was on the move

and we had to hustle forward through the woodlands every few minutes to keep up. Most of us were working the leading edge when Mike called us back to the trailing edge of the flock. He pointed to a third Bar-winged Weaver and we were able to get a few photos. The bird turned out to have been banded (ringed)!



Banded Bar-winged Weaver foraging at Mutinondo Wilderness

We had more good birding for the rest of the walk, as well as some nice insects. Walking through the woods, Kyle pointed out a flower stalk where several large blister beetles were perched. They are called Cape Mounted Rifle Beetles because they resemble the colors of the uniforms worn by the Cape Mounted Riflemen, South African military units of the 19th century. I am not sure of the exact species, but it is one of the Mylabris beetles ('blister beetles' that can deploy powerful chemical agents). Soon afterwards, we saw a Millipede Assassin - glancing at the photo on my camera LCD back at the lodge, William said it was a Maraenaspis species. Some subsequent research I did pointed in the direction of Maraenaspis vorax - the Voracious Assassin Bug, but I am not 100% certain about that.



Cape Mounted Rifle Beetle – Mylabris species (a blister beetle)



Millipede Assassin - Maraenaspis species, possibly Maraenaspis vorax.

Then sadly, it was time to depart. We enjoyed our stay at Mutinondo very much, despite being somewhat unlucky with timing, conditions, and so forth. The lodging and staff are excellent and the vast habitats are even better. I hope to visit again someday for a longer period of time.

We got on the road after breakfast, taking packed lunches for the journey. The plan was to break up the drive to our lodge in the Lower Zambezi Valley with an overnight stay a little north of Lusaka – it was just too long a drive to accomplish comfortably in one day. So we drove to Wright House Farm in Chisamba a little north of Lusaka and just had time to get in some enjoyable birding before sundown. We stayed in a comfortable bungalow and the food was the best of the trip.

Nov. 30

We departed early with delicious packed breakfasts and cappuccinos. We made good time through Lusaka and before too long we were descending the escarpment into the valley. I promised to be a bit circumspect about the next location since it involves a rare and declining bird of significant conservation concern - namely African Pitta.

Until recently, African Pitta was considered something of a "Grail Bird" due to its shy and skulking habits, limited breeding area and thick habitat that is difficult to access. They are only reliably detectable during the breeding season when the males vocalize and do their hopping displays.

Several years ago, Rory McDougall and the crew at Bedrock Africa made pioneering discoveries of breeding Pittas near Siavonga, in what has become known as the Mutulanganga IBA (important bird area). A proposal in 2010 for a Chinese company to engage in clearcut logging here was defeated through a campaign of local and international pressure.

This site has become very well-known and subject to increasing pressure from birders driving from as far away as South Africa to see the birds. Lots of birders overusing audio playback can be detrimental to limited-distribution species, particularly sensitive birds like Pitta angolensis. Pittas have become harder to nail down at Mutulanganga in recent years - possibly in part due to birder pressure and overzealous playback.

Last year, safari guides that Rory has trained told him there were displaying Pittas near a lodge in the Zambezi Valley. Rory followed up on the reports and figured out the Pittas' habits, favored locations, and more. The Pittas are breeding in riverine thickets owned by the lodge, as well as on adjacent communal land. The lodge owner is very enthusiastic about protecting the Pitta habitat and hopefully persuading the local community to preserve the thickets on their land. This is because the lodge stands to benefit from birder tours coming to see the Pitta - its breeding season begins at the end of fishing season when lodge bookings tend to decline.

We were the first birders to be brought to see the Pitta. Just after us, Nik Borrow brought a BirdQuest tour to see them under Bedrock Africa's auspices. If you would like to see and photograph these African Pittas, the best and most responsible way to do so is to contact Bedrock Africa and they will arrange things.

As we drove through riverine thickets in the lodge's long driveway, we stopped to check out a nice bird party. We got stunning views of a cooperative Eastern Nicator and other good birds since my camera was packed up in the car! Roger got what would have been a great photo, except for the branch blocking 1/3 of the Nicator's body. So it goes. We were encouraged by the good birding and after checking in we went for a walk through the thickets with Kyle and Matt, the lodge manager. The plan was to do some quick birding then relax a little and try for the Pitta in the afternoon once the oppressive heat began to dwindle. We enjoyed great looks at Livingstone's Flycatcher - other birds included Grey-backed Cameroptera and four Cuckoo species - Black + Red-chested + Diederik + African,

among others. Then we returned to the lodge and had lunch on the deck overlooking the river. While we were waiting for the food to come, I tried photographing some African Palm Swifts that were zipping back and forth at eye level.



Livingstone's Flycatcher



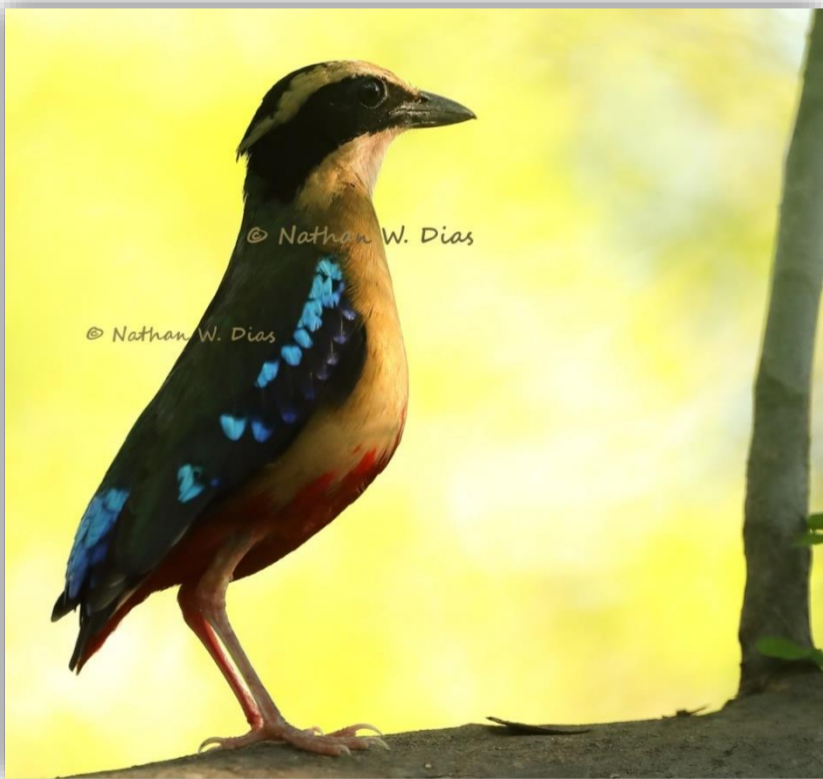
African Palm Swift



After lunch and about an hour of relaxing in our rooms, we went to try for the Pitta. African Pittas are so shy and easily disturbed that in order to get decent photos, Bedrock Africa asked Matt the lodge manager to build a simple photo hide just prior to our stay. It was a low-impact hide of simple burlap walls, stakes holding them up and some small leafy branches to obscure the outline. Rob, Roger and I sat on the ground, not far from one of the bird's favored display perches. Due to the dark conditions in the thicket under the forest canopy, I had removed the 1.4x extender from my camera. Kyle, Matt and the lodge's head guide Reuben sat a short distance behind us, spotting and letting us know other things that were happening (like when Reuben remarked that a Four-toed Sengi was moving behind us when we were photographing the Pitta).

The light was extremely challenging. Besides the dim lighting under the canopy, the Pitta was severely backlit both morning and evening - from different sides. The Pitta was a low-contrast subject against a busy background, the worst scenario for autofocus systems. I am sure that next time, the lodge will arrange the hide with better light direction.

We did Pitta sessions the afternoon of November 30 and early morning of December 1. The bird did a circuit around his territory and favored certain display perches on bare horizontal branches.



Here are a couple of Youtube videos of the Pitta displaying and vocalizing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3UoIIPDVqE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RI5JRDfHh6I>

At this point we were satisfied with our Pitta encounters. So, we went with a tentative plan to go on a game drive nearby in the Chiawa Game Management Area that borders Lower Zambezi National Park along the Zambezi River. It was one of the best days of the safari. Kyle knew all the camp and lodge owners in Chiawa GMA; the previous day he used WhatsApp on his smartphone to ask the owner of the Royal Zambezi Lodge if we could visit their waterhole the next day. Kind permission was granted.

On the ride into Chiawa, we saw Eurasian Hobby, Common Scimitarbill, Arrow-marked Babbler and more. Now in dry country, the default Hornbill changed to Red-billed. Mammal sightings picked up once we got past the villages, including a **Sharpe's Grysbok** that played peekaboo from roadside thickets. We also enjoyed regular sightings of Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters.



Sharpe's Grysbok



Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

A small herd of Impalas welcomed us to the Royal Zambezi waterhole, which is maintained in the dry season by borehole pumps. We also saw Plains Zebra, Common Warthog, Chacma Baboons (three Baboon species this safari) and a friendly bull Elephant. He had come for some cooling water + mud and then considered feeding on a somewhat torn up Boabab tree. There were also Greater Kudu - in two groups, bulls and cows.



Impala ram

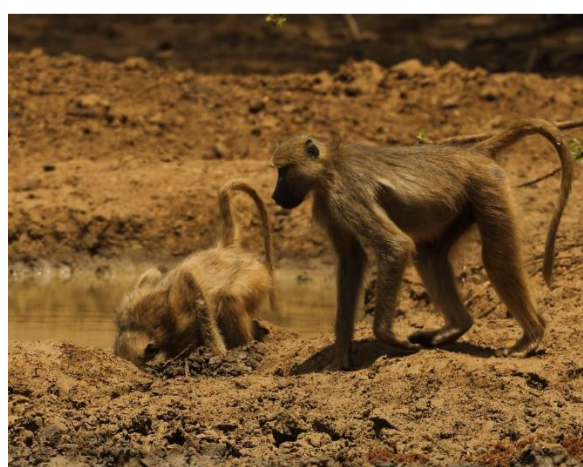


Bull Savannah Elephant



Greater Kudu

Near the next waterhole (a natural one) were some Double-banded Sandgrouse that Rob spotted. Around the waterhole were more Chacma Baboons, Water Thick-knees, female Whydahs of some sort, Southern Grey-headed Sparrows and a herd of African Buffalo.



We rode around the GMA exploring main roads and side ones. We intently scanned under bushes for coursers and Thick-knees, hoping for Bronze-winged Coursers, one of my most-wanted African bird species. Though we did not find any Bronze-winged Coursers, I did spot a beautiful pair of **Heuglin's Coursers** under a bush and Rob spotted a nice group of Spotted Thick-knees. This prompted a friendly competition between Kyle and Roger up front and Rob and me in the back, trying to out-spot each other.



Heuglin's Courser, Chiawa GMA

Then we drove down to the Zambezi to scan the river and far shoreline, as well as stretch our legs. One the way we saw birds like Green-winged Pytilia, White-fronted Bee-eaters, Wire-tailed Swallows, Village Indigobirds, and more. Riding northeast along the Zambezi, we made our way to the Chongwe River, which is the border between Chiawa GMA and Lower Zambezi National Park. We had some nice game in a large Tamarind grove there and encountered multiple herds of elephant with tiny calves.



Elephant nursing calf



Friendly Elephant by the Chongwe River



White-headed Lapwing



Elephant calf going to nurse



Common Waterbuck

On the ride home we had more good birding and finally caught up with a nemesis bird of mine - Crested Guineafowl. We saw two different groups of them.



Crested Guineafowl

The next day we took a boat trip on the Zambezi River. Rueben, one of the guides from the lodge, handled the boat and Kyle spotted and advised. Rueben did an outstanding job – he really knows how to approach birds and wildlife discretely. He often chose an oblique approach and let the current quietly and slowly take us towards our targets without spooking them. This, plus the low-slung, shallow-draft boat without an awning really helped things.

Once underway, we scanned under river banks and tree roots for Finfoot and in trees for Pel's Fishing-Owl but alas did not see any. We did have good encounters with shy and skulking birds. As we drifted quietly in the small boat, the shy birds did not mind us nearly as much as if we were on foot or in a vehicle. We were rewarded with the best looks at Black-throated Wattle-eyes of the safari. They had bedeviled me all along the way trying for a decent photo; now at the end they finally cooperated. Near the lodge in some reedbeds we saw several skulking warblers - Lesser Swamp Warbler, Great Reed-Warbler, African/Common Reed-Warbler, and Marsh Warbler. Other warbler species included Tawny-flanked Prinia, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Willow Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Apalis.



Black-throated Wattle-eye



Great Reed Warblers



Lesser Swamp Warbler

Then we enjoyed nice elephant and hippo sightings



Soon Reuben skillfully maneuvered us near a **Southern Carmine Bee-eater colony** for photos. A Pied Kingfisher was also perched nearby.



Sandbars lining the channel held African Skimmers, Reed Cormorants and Black-winged Stilts. As we proceeded downstream, the river got wider and shallower, with side channels and semi-connected oxbow lakes. We began seeing more wading birds, waterfowl and shorebirds. Wading birds included African Openbill Stork, Saddlebill Stork, Hadada Ibis, Glossy Ibis, African Spoonbill, Green-backed Heron, Squacco Heron, Cattle Egret, Grey Heron, Goliath Heron, Purple Heron, Great White Egret, Yellow-billed (Intermediate) Egret, and Little Egret.



Reed Cormorant with fish



Saddle-billed Stork



Goliath Heron

One gently sloping mudbank hosted an extroverted Black Crake, some Red-billed Teal, and a Common Sandpiper.



Nobody else wanted to use this section of riverbank.



Nile Crocodile

Then we reached a nice little cove where a shallow side channel joined the Zambezi. We pulled in as far as possible and sat there looking at all sorts of birds. Over time, the birds became used to us and some wandered closer. I was in heaven with 12 shorebird species to enjoy: Water Thick-knee, Black-winged Stilt, Blacksmith Lapwing, White-headed Lapwing, Kittlitz's Plover, Three-banded Plover, African Jacana, Ruff, Common Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, and Collared Pratincole.



African Jacana



Collared Pratincole



Reeve (female Ruff)

The next cove was shallower and filled with lush reeds. In the back was a **Rufous-bellied Heron** fishing the edges - we were thrilled to see this sought-after species. As we watched and shot some rather distant photos, another Rufous-bellied Heron came flying in to try his hand at fishing. The original occupant did not like this at all and attacked the intruder. This was a serious fight with bodily harm being the clear intent from both parties. As I shot some frames I hoped neither would be seriously injured.



The fight ended as quickly as it began, with the apparent loser flying away. I think it was the "intruder" that left but I am not certain.

Eventually we had to leave the series of nice little coves and begin working our way back to the lodge. We enjoyed more good birding and a very relaxing boat ride. Back at the lodge, we had a nice lunch; we clients toasted our successful wildlife cruise with a nice cold Savanna cider. We were sorry to have to check out and we congratulated the lodge owner on his establishment and new Pitta attraction.

After lunch, we drove to our next destination – Siavonga, on the shores of Lake Kariba. Since one never knows 100% that rarities will cooperate, we had planned a two night stay in Siavonga, which is near Mutalanganga IBA. This was our backup plan in case the Pittas had not cooperated at our first stakeout. We stopped for some birding in Mutalanganga IBA on the way to Siavonga and had some nice birding even though we did not detect any Pittas. Since we had all our luggage and gear in the car, we could not explore very far from the road. We stayed at the Lake Kariba Inns which was nice enough. Since we already had such good luck with African Pitta, the next morning we decided to skip Mutalanganga IBA. Instead, we birded areas along the dirt track down to the Zambezi at Tamarind Camp. We were hoping for a Pel’s Fishing-Owl in the giant Tamarind trees that formed a canopy over the camp. Alas, we did not have any Pel’s but we did enjoy nice birding and scenic views of the Zambezi and Zimbabwe on the other side.



Diederik Cuckoo



Dambo along the track to Tamarind Camp (photo by Rob Barnes)

After a nice morning’s birding, we returned to Kariba Inn for lunch and to check out. Then we drove to Lusaka and checked into the Cresta Golf View hotel. It was a nice enough place and had decent birding on the grounds. We had a little time for birding that afternoon and the following morning before heading to the airport for our flights home.

Our Zambia birding and mammal safari was very successful and we all had a great time. The crew at Bedrock Africa was also outstanding. Roy was very sharp and recognized immediately upon our inquiry that we were not your standard birders or even safarigoers. He tailored a trip perfectly to our desires, booking availabilities at the late date, travel logistics, and more. Rory and Doris were also very kind, friendly and on-the-ball. And Rory is an incredible guide and field man. Sort of like Yoda to Kyle's Luke Skywalker for those Star Wars fans out there. Rory is also among a handful of people I have met with a super-deep understanding of bird physiology and behavior. I struggle to describe it with the English language.

For those of you who have downloaded the Birds of Zambia App: when you listen to the sounds, you can thank Rory for the most part. Not only did Rory coauthor the species accounts, but he also made most of the audio recordings.

In terms of the bird species list - we saw 373 species and heard an additional 10-15 species, which would be pretty good for a 16 day birding-only tour that time of year in Zambia. And on our safari, we concentrated almost equally on mammals and other wildlife.

Mammals numbered 41 species, which seems pretty good. I enjoyed many lifer mammals; if I had to pick a favorite it would be the Lord Derby's Anomalures. But the great looks we had at Sitatunga, Black Lechwe, Kafue Lechwe and other goodies were hard to beat.

Mammals (41 species):

Chacma baboon	Papio ursinus
Kinda baboon	Papio kinda
Yellow baboon	Papio cynocephalus
Vervet monkey	Chlorocebus pygerythrus
Malbrouck's monkey	Chlorocebus cynosuros
Rump-spotted blue monkey	Cercopithecus mitis
Greater galago	Otolemur crassicaudatus
Lesser galago	Galago moholi
Chequered giant sengi	Rhynchocyon cirne
Scrub hare	Lepus saxatilis
Gambian sun squirrel	Heliosciurius gambianus
Smith’s bush squirrel	Paraxerus cepapi
Lord Derby's anomalure	Anomalurus derbianus
Straw-coloured fruit bat	Eidolon helvum
Yellow House Bat	Scotophilus dingannii
Side-striped jackal	Canis adustus
Slender mongoose	Herpestes sanguineus
Banded mongoose	Mungos mungo
White-tailed mongoose	Ichneumia albicauda
African civet	Civetticis civetta
Serval cat	Leptailurus serval
Bush hyrax	Heterohyrax brucei
Bush elephant	Loxodonta Africana
Common zebra	Equus quagga
Hippopotamus	Hippopotamus amphibius
Common warthog	Phacochoerus africanus
African Buffalo	Syncerus caffer
Bushbuck	Tragelaphus scriptus
Sitatunga	Tragelaphus spekei
Greater kudu	Tragelaphus strepsiceros
Common / Bush duiker	Sylvicapra grimmia
Sharpe’s grysbok	Rhaphicerus sharpei
Oribi	Ourebia ourebi
Southern reedbuck	Redunca arundinum
Puku	Kobus Vardonii
Kafue Lechwe	Kobus leche kafuiensis
Black lechwe	Kobus leche smithemani
Waterbuck (Common + Defassa)	Kobus ellipsiprymnus
Impala	Aepyoceros melampus
Tsessebe	Damaliscus lunatus
Sable antelope	Hippotragus niger

Birds (373 species):

White-faced Whistling-duck	Dendrocygna viduata
White-backed Duck	Thalassornis leuconotus
Spur-winged Goose	Plectropterus gambensis
African Comb Duck	Sarkidiornis melanotos
Egyptian Goose	Alopochen aegyptiaca
African Pygmy-goose	Nettapus auritus
Hottentot Teal	Spatula hottentota
Yellow-billed Duck	Anas undulata
Red-billed Teal	Anas erythrorhyncha
Helmeted Guineafowl	Numida meleagris
Crested Guineafowl	Guttera pucherani
Coqui Francolin	Peliperdix coqui
Red-billed Francolin	Pternistis adpersus
Natal Francolin	Pternistis natalensis
Red-necked Francolin	Pternistis afer
Swainson's Francolin	Pternistis swainsonii
Yellow-billed Stork	Mycteria ibis
African Openbill	Anastomus lamelligerus
Abdim's Stork	Ciconia abdimii
African Woollyneck	Ciconia microscelis
Saddlebill	Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis
African Sacred Ibis	Threskiornis aethiopicus
Hadada Ibis	Bostrychia hagedash
Glossy Ibis	Plegadis falcinellus
African Spoonbill	Platalea alba
Dwarf Bittern	Ixobrychus sturmii

Black-crowned Night-heron	Nycticorax nycticorax
Green-backed Heron	Butorides striata
Squacco Heron	Ardeola ralloides
Rufous-bellied Heron	Ardeola rufiventris
Cattle Egret	Bubulcus ibis
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea
Black-headed Heron	Ardea melanocephala
Goliath Heron	Ardea goliath
Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea
Great White Egret	Ardea alba
Yellow-billed Egret	Ardea brachyrhyncha
Black Heron	Egretta ardesiaca
Slaty Egret	Egretta vinaceigula
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta
Hamerkop	Scopus umbretta
Pink-backed Pelican	Pelecanus rufescens
Long-tailed Cormorant	Microcarbo africanus
Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo
African Darter	Anhinga rufa
Osprey	Pandion haliaetus
Black-winged Kite	Elanus caeruleus
African Harrier-hawk	Polyboroides typus
White-backed Vulture	Gyps africanus
White-headed Vulture	Trigonoceps occipitalis
Lappet-faced Vulture	Torgos tracheliotos
Black-chested Snake-eagle	Circaetus pectoralis
Brown Snake-eagle	Circaetus cinereus
Western Banded Snake-eagle	Circaetus cinerascens
Bateleur	Terathopius ecaudatus
Crowned Eagle	Stephanoaetus coronatus
Wahlberg's Eagle	Hieraaetus wahlbergi
Tawny Eagle	Aquila rapax
Lizard Buzzard	Kaupifalco monogrammicus
Dark Chanting-goshawk	Melierax metabates
African Marsh-harrier	Circus ranivorus
Montagu's Harrier	Circus pygargus
Black Kite	Milvus migrans
Yellow-billed Kite	Milvus aegyptius
African Fish-eagle	Haliaeetus vocifer
Eurasian Buzzard	Buteo buteo
Black-bellied Bustard	Lissotis melanogaster
Black Crane	Zapornia flavirostra
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus
Red-knobbed Coot	Fulica cristata
Grey Crowned-crane	Balearica regulorum
Wattled Crane	Bugeranus carunculatus
Common Buttonquail	Turnix sylvaticus
Water Thick-knee	Burhinus vermiculatus
Spotted Thick-knee	Burhinus capensis
Black-winged Stilt	Himantopus himantopus
Long-toed Lapwing	Vanellus crassirostris
Blacksmith Lapwing	Vanellus armatus
White-headed Lapwing	Vanellus albiceps
Crowned Lapwing	Vanellus coronatus
Wattled Lapwing	Vanellus senegallus
Common Ringed Plover	Charadrius hiaticula
Kittlitz's Plover	Charadrius pecuarius
African Three-banded Plover	Charadrius tricollaris
Caspian Plover	Charadrius asiaticus
Lesser Jacana	Microparra capensis
African Jacana	Actophilornis africanus
Black-tailed Godwit	Limosa limosa
Ruff	Calidris pugnax
Curlew Sandpiper	Calidris ferruginea
Temminck's Stint	Calidris temminckii
Little Stint	Calidris minuta
African Snipe	Gallinago nigripennis
Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos
Green Sandpiper	Tringa ochropus
Marsh Sandpiper	Tringa stagnatilis
Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola
Common Greenshank	Tringa nebularia

Temminck's Courser	Cursorius temminckii
Three-banded Courser	Rhinoptilus cinctus
Collared Pratincole	Glareola pratincola
African Skimmer	Rynchops flavirostris
Grey-headed Gull	Larus cirrocephalus
Common Gull-billed Tern	Gelochelidon nilotica
Caspian Tern	Hydroprogne caspia
Whiskered Tern	Chlidonias hybrida
White-winged Tern	Chlidonias leucopterus
Double-banded Sandgrouse	Pterocles bicinctus
Rock Dove	Columba livia
Mourning Collared-dove	Streptopelia decipiens
Red-eyed Dove	Streptopelia semitorquata
Ring-necked Dove	Streptopelia capicola
Laughing Dove	Spilopelia senegalensis
Emerald-spotted Wood-dove	Turtur chalcospilos
Namaqua Dove	Oena capensis
African Green-pigeon	Treron calvus
Schalow's Turaco	Tauraco schalowi
Ross's Turaco	Musophaga rossae
Grey Go-away-bird	Corythaixoides concolor
Senegal Coucal	Centropus senegalensis
Coppery-tailed Coucal	Centropus cupreicaudus
White-browed Coucal	Centropus superciliosus
Black Coucal	Centropus grillii
Levaillant's Cuckoo	Clamator levaillantii
Jacobin Cuckoo	Clamator jacobinus
Diederik Cuckoo	Chrysococcyx caprius
Black Cuckoo	Cuculus clamosus
Red-chested Cuckoo	Cuculus solitarius
African Cuckoo	Cuculus gularis
Southern White-faced Owl	Ptilopsis granti
African Wood-owl	Strix woodfordii
African Barred Owlet	Glaucidium capense
Rufous-cheeked Nightjar	Caprimulgus rufigena
Fiery-necked Nightjar	Caprimulgus pectoralis
Pennant-winged Nightjar	Caprimulgus vexillarius
African Palm-swift	Cypsiurus parvus
Common Swift	Apus apus
Little Swift	Apus affinis
White-rumped Swift	Apus caffer
Speckled Mousebird	Colius striatus
Red-faced Mousebird	Urocolius indicus
Narina Trogon	Apaloderma narina
Racquet-tailed Roller	Coracias spatulatus
Lilac-breasted Roller	Coracias caudatus
European Roller	Coracias garrulus
Broad-billed Roller	Eurystomus glaucurus
Grey-headed Kingfisher	Halcyon leucocephala
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	Halcyon albiventris
Striped Kingfisher	Halcyon chelicuti
Woodland Kingfisher	Halcyon senegalensis
African Pygmy-kingfisher	Ispidina picta
Malachite Kingfisher	Corythornis cristatus
Half-collared Kingfisher	Alcedo semitorquata
Giant Kingfisher	Megaceryle maxima
Pied Kingfisher	Ceryle rudis
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	Merops hirundineus
Little Bee-eater	Merops pusillus
Blue-breasted Bee-eater	Merops variegatus
White-fronted Bee-eater	Merops bullockoides
White-throated Bee-eater	Merops albicollis
Böhm's Bee-eater	Merops boehmi
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	Merops persicus
Olive Bee-eater	Merops superciliosus
European Bee-eater	Merops apiaster
Southern Carmine Bee-eater	Merops nubicoides
Common Hoopoe	Upupa epops
Green Woodhoopoe	Phoeniculus purpureus
Common Scimitarbill	Rhinopomastus cyanomelas
Southern Ground-hornbill	Bucorvus leadbeateri
Red-billed Hornbill	Tockus erythrorhynchus

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	Tockus leucomelas
Crowned Hornbill	Lophoceros alboterminatus
African Grey Hornbill	Lophoceros nasutus
Pale-billed Hornbill	Lophoceros pallidirostris
Trumpeter Hornbill	Bycanistes bucinator
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	Pogoniulus bilineatus
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	Pogoniulus chrysoconus
Zambian Barbet	Lybius chaplini
Black-collared Barbet	Lybius torquatus
Black-backed Barbet	Pogonornis macclounii
Brown-backed Honeybird	Prodotiscus regulus
Greater Honeyguide	Indicator indicator
Bennett's Woodpecker	Campethera bennettii
Golden-tailed Woodpecker	Campethera abingoni
Bearded Woodpecker	Dendropicos namaquus
Cardinal Woodpecker	Dendropicos fuscescens
Olive Woodpecker	Dendropicos griseocephalus
Amur Falcon	Falco amurensis
Eurasian Hobby	Falco subbuteo
African Hobby	Falco cuvierii
Lanner Falcon	Falco biarmicus
Meyers Parrot	Poicephalus meyeri
African Broadbill	Smithornis capensis
African Pitta	Pitta angolensis
Chinspot Batis	Batis molitor
Black-throated Wattle-eye	Platysteira peltata
White-crested Helmetshrike	Prionops plumatus
Retz's Helmetshrike	Prionops retzii
Grey-headed Bush-shrike	Malaconotus blanchoti
Orange-breasted Bush-shrike	Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus
Marsh Tchagra	Bocagia minuta
Brown-crowned Tchagra	Tchagra australis
Black-crowned Tchagra	Tchagra senegalus
Black-backed Puffback	Dryoscopus cubla
Tropical Boubou	Laniarius aethiopicus
White-breasted Cuckooshrike	Ceblepyris pectoralis
Black Cuckooshrike	Campephaga flava
Purple-throated Cuckooshrike	Campephaga quiscalina
Magpie Shrike	Urolestes melanoleucus
Red-backed Shrike	Lanius collurio
Lesser Grey Shrike	Lanius minor
Common Fiscal	Lanius collaris
Eurasian Golden Oriole	Oriolus oriolus
African Golden Oriole	Oriolus auratus
Eastern Black-headed Oriole	Oriolus larvatus
Fork-tailed Drongo	Dicrurus adsimilis
African Paradise-flycatcher	Terpsiphone viridis
Pied Crow	Corvus albus
White-necked Raven	Corvus albicollis
White-tailed Blue-flycatcher	Elminia albicauda
White-winged Black Tit	Melaniparus leucomelas
Southern Black Tit	Melaniparus niger
Rufous-bellied Tit	Melaniparus rufiventris
Miombo Tit	Melaniparus griseiventris
Grey Penduline-tit	Anthoscopus caroli
Eastern Nicator	Nicator gularis
Dusky Lark	Pinarocorys nigricans
Fawn-coloured Lark	Calendulauda africanoides
Rufous-naped Lark	Mirafrā africana
Flappet Lark	Mirafrā rufocinnamomea
Red-capped Lark	Calandrella cinerea
Common Bulbul	Pycnonotus barbatus
Sombre Greenbul	Andropadus importunus
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	Chlorocichla flaviventris
Pale-throated Greenbul	Atimastillas flavigula
Terrestrial Brownbul	Phyllastrephus terrestris
Grey-olive Greenbul	Phyllastrephus cerviniventris
Black Saw-wing	Psalidoprocne pristoptera
Grey-rumped Swallow	Pseudhirundo griseopyga
Banded Martin	Neophedina cincta
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica
Red-throated Rock Martin	Ptyonoprogne rufigula

Northern House Martin	Delichon urbicum
Lesser Striped Swallow	Cecropis abyssinica
Mosque Swallow	Cecropis senegalensis
Moustached Grass-warbler	Melocichla mentalis
Long-billed Crombec	Sylvietta rufescens
Red-capped Crombec	Sylvietta ruficapilla
Livingstone's Flycatcher	Erythrocercus livingstonei
Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus
Lesser Swamp-warbler	Acrocephalus gracilirostris
Great Reed-warbler	Acrocephalus arundinaceus
African / Common Reed-warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus
Marsh Warbler	Acrocephalus palustris
African Yellow Warbler	Iduna natalensis
Icterine Warbler	Hippolais icterina
Fan-tailed Grassbird	Schoenicola brevirostris
Red-faced Cisticola	Cisticola erythrops
Rattling Cisticola	Cisticola chiniana
Luapula Cisticola	Cisticola luapula
Chirping Cisticola	Cisticola pipiens
Levaillant's Cisticola	Cisticola tinniens
Stout Cisticola	Cisticola robustus
Croaking Cisticola	Cisticola natalensis
Neddicky	Cisticola fulvicapilla
Long-tailed / Tabora Cisticola	Cisticola angusticauda
Zitting Cisticola	Cisticola juncidis
Desert Cisticola	Cisticola aridulus
Tawny-flanked Prinia	Prinia subflava
Bar-throated Apalis	Apalis thoracica
Yellow-breasted Apalis	Apalis flavida
Grey-backed Camaroptera	Camaroptera brachyura
Miombo Wren-warbler	Calamonastes undosus
Stierling's Wren-warbler	Calamonastes stierlingi
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	Eremomela icteropygialis
Green-capped Eremomela	Eremomela scotops
Black-necked Eremomela	Eremomela atricollis
Arrow-marked Babbler	Turdoides jardineii
Hartlaub's Babbler	Turdoides hartlaubii
African Yellow White-eye	Zosterops senegalensis
Yellow-bellied Hyliota	Hyliota flavigaster
Southern Hyliota	Hyliota australis
Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis
Greater Blue-eared Starling	Lamprotornis chalybaeus
Lesser Blue-eared Starling	Lamprotornis chloropterus
Meves's Long-tailed Starling	Lamprotornis mevesii
Violet-backed Starling	Cinnyricinclus leucogaster
Red-winged Starling	Onychognathus morio
Red-billed Oxpecker	Buphagus erythrorhynchus
Kurrichane Thrush	Turdus libonyana
Bearded Scrub-robin	Tychaedon quadrivirgata
Miombo Scrub-robin	Tychaedon barbata
White-browed Scrub Robin	Cercotrichas leucophrys
Pale Flycatcher	Agricola pallidus
Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata
Ashy Flycatcher	Fraseria caerulescens
Swamp Flycatcher	Muscicapa aquatica
African Dusky Flycatcher	Muscicapa adusta
White-browed Robin-chat	Cossypha heuglini
Red-capped Robin-chat	Cossypha natalensis
Bocage's Akalat	Sheppardia bocagei
Collared Palm-thrush	Cichladusa arquata
Collared Flycatcher	Ficedula albicollis
Common Stonechat	Saxicola torquatus
Sooty Chat	Myrmecocichla nigra
Arnot's Chat	Myrmecocichla arnotti
Capped Wheatear	Oenanthe pileata
Anchieta's Sunbird	Anthreptes anchietae
Western Violet-backed Sunbird	Anthreptes longuemarei
Collared Sunbird	Hedydipna collaris
Green-headed Sunbird	Cyanomitra verticalis
Olive Sunbird	Cyanomitra olivacea
Amethyst Sunbird	Chalcomitra amethystina
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	Chalcomitra senegalensis

Bronze Sunbird	Nectarinia kilimensis
Mariqua Sunbird	Cinnyris mariquensis
Purple-banded Sunbird	Cinnyris bifasciatus
White-bellied Sunbird	Cinnyris talatala
Variable Sunbird	Cinnyris venustus
Copper Sunbird	Cinnyris cupreus
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus
Northern Grey-headed Sparrow	Passer griseus
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	Passer diffusus
Yellow-throated Bush-sparrow	Gymnoris superciliaris
Red-billed Buffalo-weaver	Bubalornis niger
White-browed Sparrow-weaver	Plocepasser mahali
Thick-billed Weaver	Amblyospiza albifrons
Spectacled Weaver	Ploceus ocularis
Holub's Golden Weaver	Ploceus xanthops
Lesser Masked Weaver	Ploceus intermedius
Southern Masked Weaver	Ploceus velatus
Katanga Masked Weaver	Ploceus katangae
Village Weaver	Ploceus cucullatus
Dark-backed Weaver	Ploceus bicolor
Bar-winged Weaver	Ploceus angolensis
Southern Red-headed Weaver	Anaplectes rubriceps
Red-headed Quelea	Quelea erythrops
Red-billed Quelea	Quelea quelea
Black-winged Bishop	Euplectes hordeaceus
Yellow Bishop	Euplectes capensis
Fan-tailed Widowbird	Euplectes axillaris
Yellow-mantled Widowbird	Euplectes macroura
Marsh Widowbird	Euplectes hartlaubi
White-winged Widowbird	Euplectes albonotatus
Green-winged Pytilia	Pytilia melba
Red-throated Twinspot	Hypargos niveoguttatus
Brown Firefinch	Lagonosticta nitidula
Red-billed Firefinch	Lagonosticta senegala
Jameson's Firefinch	Lagonosticta rhodopareia
Blue Waxbill	Uraeginthus angolensis
Fawn-breasted Waxbill	Estrilda paludicola
Common Waxbill	Estrilda astrild
Locust Finch	Paludipasser locustella
Bronze Mannikin	Spermestes cucullata
Village Indigobird	Vidua chalybeata
Purple Indigobird	Vidua purpurascens
Pin-tailed Whydah	Vidua macroura
Long-tailed Paradise-whydah	Vidua paradisaea
Western Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava
Cape Wagtail	Motacilla capensis
African Pied Wagtail	Motacilla aguimp
Fülleborn's Longclaw	Macronyx fuelleborni
Rosy-throated Longclaw	Macronyx ameliae
African Pipit	Anthus cinnamomeus
Mountain Pipit	Anthus hoeschi
Woodland Pipit	Anthus nyassae
Buffy Pipit	Anthus vaalensis
Tree Pipit	Anthus trivialis
Striped Pipit	Anthus lineiventris
Yellow-fronted Canary	Crithagra mozambica
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting	Emberiza tahapisi
Golden-breasted Bunting	Emberiza flaviventris
Cabanis's Bunting	Emberiza cabanisi