



A trip highlight was certainly our wonderful encounter with several Chaplin's Barbets in the Nkanga Conservation Area. This species is endemic to Zambia and is classified as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International. (Nik Borrow)

ZAMBIA (SPECIALITIES) with ZIMBABWE extension

30 SEPTEMBER – 18 OCTOBER 2018

LEADER: NIK BORROW assisted by PETER MAGOSVONGWE in Zimbabwe

Zambia is a huge, and in terms of a birding trip a somewhat unwieldy country and so this tour concentrated on the exciting and most definitely remote northwestern corner of the country on the Angolan and Congolese borders and the more accessible southwest with the aim of gathering quality rather than quantity and in particular targeting some most of the country's most desirable species, notably Zambia's only true endemic the snowy Chaplin's Barbet and the delightful Black-cheeked Lovebird which is virtually an endemic as in its pure and wild state the species is probably restricted to the country. We began our ambitious road trip in the capital of Lusaka but did not linger long there as our first drive took us to the tranquil Kafue Lodge near Mpongwe for an overnight stay where we managed to briefly sample the miombo woodlands, attaining great

views of the uncommon Shelley's Sunbird, Black-backed Barbet and Black-faced Canary and at night stayed up to watch the huge marmalade-coloured Pel's Fishing Owl perched at the jetty. Traveling onwards through the industrial Copperbelt weaving in and out of the long lines of ore-bearing trucks we broke the journey at Mutanda where we found Bocage's Akalat to be a garden bird! The river crossings between here and the distant town of Mwinilunga provided bridge habitat suitable for Red-throated Cliff Swallow and also enabled us to have amazing views of the rarely seen Bamboo Warbler. The outpost town of Mwinilunga provided our base from which we explored the region and during our stay Grimwood's and Fülleborn's Longclaws were seen in the dambos, the fantastic Black-and-rufous Swallow, Black-collared Bulbul and Angolan Lark on the plains and Bannerman's Sunbird and the enchanting Laura's Woodland Warbler found secluded hiding places in the mysterious mushitus. Bar-winged Weaver and the charming Black-necked Eremomela were searched out in the miombo woodlands and Margaret's Batis and 'Perrin's' Gorgeous Bushshrike in the *Cryptosepalum* woodlands. The next section of the tour took us down to the south of the country near Choma where Sycamore Fig trees are scattered over the sprawling ranch-lands which provide the favoured food for the endemic Chaplin's Barbet. We saw several of these striking birds and then turned our attention to the miombo which is home to the attractive Racket-tailed Roller. Finally, we visited the dramatic Victoria Falls and explored the mopane woodlands that border the Machile River where large numbers of Black-cheeked Lovebirds sheltered from the heat and dust and came down to drink at the drying pools. The trip extension took us to the Vumba Mountains in Zimbabwe where we enjoyed terrific views of the pretty Swynnerton's Robin as well as the regional endemics; Roberts's Warbler and Chirinda Apalis. Other specialities seen during this amazing road trip included Shelley's Francolin, Natal Spurfowl, Black-rumped Buttonquail, Thick-billed Cuckoo, Southern Carmine Bee-eater, Pale-billed Hornbill, Whyte's and Miombo Pied Barbets, the 'Grey-headed' form of Brown-necked Parrot, Miombo and Rufous-bellied Tits, Stripe-cheeked and Grey-olive Greenbuls, Red-capped Crombec, Barratt's Warbler, Lazy, Luapula and Dambo Cisticolas, Brown-headed Apalis, Miombo and Stierling's Wren Warblers, Hartlaub's Babbler, Meves's, Burchell's and Sharp-tailed Starlings, Grey-winged Robin Chat, Miombo Rock Thrush, Eastern Miombo and Bates's Sunbirds, Brown Firefinch, Grey Waxbill, Locust Finch and Black-eared Seed eater.



Shelley's Sunbird (left) and Grey Penduline Tit (right) were both seen at our first port of call in the miombo surrounding Kafue Lodge, near Mpongwe. (Nik Borrow)

Our tour began in the capital of Lusaka but we did not linger long and once everyone had arrived we packed up the luggage into our two four wheel drive cars and set off on a six hour journey with little to see en route except plenty of Pied Crows and the odd Lizard Buzzard, Gabar Goshawk, Yellow-billed Kite and African Pied Wagtail. Our destination was the delightful Kafue Lodge deep inside the Machiya-Fungulwe Game Management Area. This well-appointed camp is set on the banks of the Kafue River in a marvellous tranquil setting of dams, marshes, grassy plains and some fine miombo. Fires were already ripping through the dry landscape and the first flush of red and bright green leaves also lit up the woodland. It was quite obvious that

for some species these were signs that the breeding season should get underway and already Lesser Striped Swallows and Dark-backed Weaver had nests around the lodge. We spent the afternoon walking in the miombo but the activity was slow although we found Pale-billed Hornbill, Rufous-bellied Tit, Grey Penduline Tit, Miombo Blue-eared Starling, Miombo Scrub Robin, Arnot's Chat and perhaps best of all a super male Shelley's Sunbird. As dusk fell Fiery-necked Nightjars whistled their "good-Lord-deliver-us" calls from the river banks and Square-tailed Nightjar was seen. At night those that wished kept a vigil for the resident Pel's Fishing Owl and sure enough the enormous marmalade-coloured owl paid a visit shortly after nine o'clock so that a good night's sleep was also on the agenda!

Just before dawn African Wood Owls were very active and in the first light African Broadbills were also busy twirling around in the thickets. As the sun rose Schalow's and Ross's Turacos were already feeding up in the fruiting trees and a pretty little male Red-throated Twinspot was seen well. By the edge of the dam Luapula Cisticola was coaxed into view and we saw a brightly coloured Black-faced Canary. After breakfast we had to get on the road again but other species seen during our short visit included White-faced Whistling Duck, Spur-winged Goose, Yellow-billed Duck, Helmeted Guineafowl, Black-crowned Night Heron, Striated Heron, Western Cattle and Great Egrets, African Marsh Harrier, African Jacana, Common Sandpiper, Red-eyed and Ring-necked Doves, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, African Green Pigeon, Klaas's Cuckoo, White-rumped Swift, Speckled Mousebird, Brown-hooded, Malachite and Pied Kingfishers, European Bee-eater, African Hoopoe, Crowned Hornbill, Yellow-rumped and Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds, Black-collared Barbet, Lesser Honeyguide, Cardinal Woodpecker, Chinspot Batis, Grey-headed and Orange-breasted Bushshrikes, Black-crowned Tchagra, Black-backed Puffback, Brubru, Black-headed Oriole, Fork-tailed Drongo, African Paradise Flycatcher, Dark-capped Bulbul, Little and Yellow-bellied Greenbuls, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Terrestrial Brownbul, Common House Martin, Willow Warbler, African Yellow White-eye, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Violet-backed Starling, Kurrichane Thrush, Southern Black and Ashy Flycatchers, White-browed Robin-Chat, Collared, Scarlet-chested, White-bellied and Purple-banded Sunbirds, Yellow-throated Petronia, Spectacled, Holub's Golden and Village Weavers, Black-winged Red Bishop, Yellow-mantled Widowbird and Bronze and Red-backed Mannikins.



At Mutanda we had excellent views of Brown-headed Apalis (left, Nik Borrow) and found a Bocage's Akalat in the lush riverine vegetation although we had to wait for the return visit for really good views. (right, Phil Tizzard)

The drive was ornithologically uneventful as it took us through the main mining areas but finally we passed the busy town of Solwezi and made an overnight stop at Mutanda. The lodge here is surrounded by extensive grounds situated on the river banks above Mutanda Falls. It was a very pleasant spot to spend the late afternoon and the following early morning and was surprisingly birdy and we easily found Brown-headed Apalis and more Black-faced Canaries. A Bocage's Akalat was far more skulking and nervous Grey-olive Greenbuls also kept to the shadows. The fast flowing river held a pair of African Black Duck and Reed

Cormorant and in the riverine vegetation we noted the attractive *stormsi* race of African Thrush as well as Long-crested Eagle, Little Swift, Broad-billed Roller, Tropical Boubou, White-chinned Prinia, Olive and Amethyst Sunbirds, Grey Waxbill and Brimstone Canary.



The Bamboo Warbler is a skulking, rare and localised species but we enjoyed some amazing views en route to Mwinilunga where fast flowing rivers with lush riverine vegetation would occasionally break up the somewhat monotonous dry miombo woodlands. (Nik Borrow)

The road between Mutanda and Mwinilunga in the far northwest of the country was somewhat quieter than the main highways we had travelled on previously and we were able to make a number of casual roadside birding stops at the various river valleys and plains along the way. At one crossing a Half-collared Kingfisher was seen and we found a bridge that was occupied with breeding Red-throated Cliff Swallows, Cassin's Flycatchers were on the river and nearby a single Sharp-tailed Starling was identified. However, the star bird of the afternoon had to be the notoriously elusive Bamboo Warbler that sang persistently at us and allowed absolutely amazing views as it crept from one hiding place to another. One of the larger plains we crossed delivered our first Fülleborn's Longclaws and there were also noisy Hartlaub's Babblers and non-breeding plumaged Marsh Widowbirds as well as Red-capped Lark, Croaking and Wing-snapping Cisticolas, African Stonechat and Red-billed Quelea. Other new species seen on the journey included Brown Snake Eagle, Western Banded Snake Eagle, Bateleur, African Hawk Eagle, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Black-collared Barbet, White-winged Black Tit, Black Saw-wing, Mosque Swallow, Moustached Grass Warbler, Red-faced Cisticola, Splendid Starling, African Firefinch, Common Waxbill and Mountain Wagtail. We arrived at our comfortable lodge on the outskirts of Mwinilunga in the late afternoon, scenically situated overlooking the Lunga River where a Bat Hawk put in a one night appearance for some members of the group but was replaced by a Eurasian Hobby at dawn the following morning.

For the next five nights, we used Mwinilunga as a base to explore the surrounding countryside. The nearby Luakera Forest was a good place to start and we visited this area several times. Sadly, recent works have devastated the forest either side of the widened dirt road and there is also rampant tree-felling going on within this forest reserve so that the whole region had been greatly changed since our last visit. The extraction of timber combined with the fact that this was perhaps the hottest and driest month and many species had begun to nest so that the birds had fallen silent and the non-breeding flocks had not yet formed meant that we perhaps suffered a harder time searching out the special birds of the area. In particular we were looking for the unusual Bar-winged Weaver that favours the moss festooned branches of the taller trees and forages for food in the manner of a creeper or nuthatch. It was hard work but we managed two sightings during our visit. The pretty little Black-necked Eremomela was another major target which didn't give itself up easily but finally we managed several good encounters. Afep Pigeons were seen on a number of occasions flying over as was the grey-headed form of Brown-necked Parrot. Southern Ground Hornbill

impressed, Green-backed Honeybird was seen well and handsome Retz's Helmetshrikes were regularly encountered whilst other common species included Black, African and Common Cuckoos, White-breasted, Black and Purple-throated Cuckooshrikes, African Golden Oriole, Trilling Cisticola, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Green-capped Eremomela, Arrow-marked Babbler, White-browed Scrub Robin, Pale and Collared Flycatchers, Western Violet-backed Sunbird, Red-headed Weaver, Orange-winged Pytilia and Golden-breasted Bunting.



In the Luakera Forest we found the rather atypical Bar-winged Weaver (left) and on the Chitunta Plain were numerous Black-and-rufous Swallows (right). (Nik Borrow)

At the Chitunta Plain we were met with a target bird immediately upon arrival in the form of the stunning Black-and-rufous Swallow. A number were seen during this first morning but we never met with them again for the rest of our stay and it was surmised that they were mainly moving through at this time and occasionally finding some handy grass stems to perch on and rest.



The more widespread Fülleborn's Longclaw (left) was more common than the localised Grimwood's Longclaw (right). (Nik Borrow)

No nests of the localised Bocage's Weaver had been found this season and our visit was timed right at the end of their possible breeding period anyway so we were not expecting to see this bird but nonetheless we

trekked cross country to the area where we had seen them on the previous trip but the flood plain was bone dry and it came as little surprise when we had to return empty handed.

Despite the dry conditions we fared somewhat better with the longclaws and apart from plenty more Fülleborn's Longclaws we also found Rosy-throated Longclaw and the highly desirable Grimwood's Longclaw which favoured the wetter ground. Numbers of Locust Finch bounced up from under our feet but as usual trying to see them on the ground was a challenge! Levillant's Cisticolas seemed to common along the river edges and we also found Zitting Cisticola and numerous Dambo Cisticolas out on the plains. Finding Angolan Lark was much more of a challenge and our first visit to the plains drew a blank. We searched another area further north and even though we heard the bird all we could find were Flappet and Red-capped Larks although sightings of pairs of Black-rumped Buttonquail and Cuckoo-finch were a nice consolation prize. We finally found the Angolan Lark back on the Chitunta Plains soon after first light on another morning when some half-hearted song enabled us to track one down and obtained decent scope views as it perched on a termite mound. During our meanderings over these plains, we also found Hadada Ibis, Wahlberg's Eagle, African Wattled Lapwing, Temminck's Courser, Wood Sandpiper, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Swamp Nightjar, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Fawn-breasted Waxbill and African and Buffy Pipits.



At Hillwood Farm and in the Nchila Wildlife Reserve we found the unusual Black-collared Bulbul (left) and attractive Laura's Woodland Warbler (right). (Nik Borrow)

Hillwood Farm lies within the Nchila Wildlife Reserve which is a privately owned game reserve set up primarily for hunting. It is well protected for conservation purposes and consequently holds some special birds in its beautiful, peaceful landscape of open plains punctuated by small grey termite mounds that gently rise up from grassy dambos encircled by miombo in the first flush of red and emerald new growth contrasting with the shady viridian, sombre mushitus that wind along the damper gullies.

The flowering trees in the gardens attract sunbirds and in particular we hunted out Bannerman's Sunbird and the unassuming Bates's Sunbird, a widespread west and central African species which is usually overlooked through its main range as it is so easily confused with females of other species. In Zambia the confusion species tend to be lacking and so it is more easily 'ticked'! On the forest edges and in the dambos can be found one of Africa's most curious bulbuls, the beautiful Black-collared Bulbul and after some searching we enjoyed great views of a pair. Other new species seen whilst on the reserve included Woolly-necked Stork, Black-winged Kite, Black-chested Snake Eagle, African Goshawk, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Blue Malkoha, Narina Trogon, Little Bee-eater, Green-backed (Little Spotted) Woodpecker, Honeyguide Greenbul, Short-winged Cisticola, Spotted Flycatcher, Green-throated and Variable Sunbirds, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, and Plain-backed Pipit.

The other major habitat in the reserve that requires serious attention are the evergreen forest mushrooms which form in the wetter areas within the miombo. In these dark woodlands with their tangled lianas we found the attractive Laura's Woodland Warbler and the brightly coloured Grey-winged Robin-Chat which was also present in the forest that surrounds the source of the Zambezi River that rises just inside the Zambian border south of Hillwood. We visited this protected area walking along the wooden walkways underneath the big trees that shade the small pool of water which does little more than seep out of the ground from beneath some tangled roots. A convenient sign labelled "source" with an arrow pointing to the puddle is placed so that there can be absolutely no mistake confirming what we were looking at although it almost seemed like some sort of incredulous joke that this humble pool could be the beginning of those great cascades! There was some bird activity here and we found Cabanis's Greenbul, excitable Buff-throated Apalis, Fraser's Rufous Thrush and a gorgeous Red-capped Robin-Chat. Whilst in the surrounding miombo we discovered a daytime African Barred Owlet, glimpsed a Red-capped Crombec and also saw our first White-crested Helmetshrike and Yellow-bellied Eremomela.



Specialties of the Cryptosepalum: Margaret's Batis finally surrendered for great views (left, Phil Tizzard) and 'Perrin's' Gorgeous Bushshrike also showed well. (right, Nik Borrow)

On our last day in the area a very early predawn start took us southwards to the Mayau area where in 1964 the type specimen of the mysterious White-chested Tinkerbird was obtained. Recently this mysterious bird has through DNA analysis been confirmed to be an aberrant Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird and so the pressure was off to rediscover it for ourselves. Fortunately, there were other reasons for bringing us down to this remote area namely a chance to see Margaret's Batis and the stunning 'Perrin's' Gorgeous Bush-shrike. These species inhabit the dry, evergreen 'Mavunda' *Cryptosepalum* woodland and no sooner had we got out of the cars than a pair of batis popped into view but frustratingly would not allow themselves to be seen by everyone. Fortunately, the species appears to be not uncommon in these woodlands and was also quite vocal so locating more birds was not so much of a problem as seeing them and we spent a fair amount of time before we found a bird that would sit and pose nicely. The bushshrike was somewhat easier to see and tended to sit in the open, calling loudly, the jazzy red, green and yellow of its plumage burning into our retinas. Most of the other species present were by now well familiar to us but we also added a colourful Black-fronted Bushshrike and the fork-tailed 'Ludwig's' Square-tailed Drongo to our lists.

With the key birds under the belt we returned to Mwinilunga but stopped along the way for more miombo birding. Black-necked Eremomelas showed particularly well and we were pleased to finally catch up with the surprisingly scarce Miombo Pied Barbet at the same location. A displaying Thick-billed Cuckoo was also scoped on an exposed perch and other successes included the nondescript Miombo Wren-Warbler, a super African Spotted Creeper, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater and surprisingly our first Southern Hyliota.

The time had now come for us to retrace our steps back to Lusaka and revisiting Mutanda we obtained far superior views of Bocage's Akalat and added Olive Woodpecker and Black-throated Wattle-eye to our lists. With more time in the miombo and riverside at Kafue Lodge Black-backed Barbet was finally seen by all and

we also added Yellow-billed Stork, Rufous-bellied Heron, Little Sparrowhawk, African Fish Eagle, Green Wood Hoopoe, Common Scimitarbill, Trumpeter Hornbill, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Bennett's Woodpecker, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Brown Firefinch, Pin-tailed Whydah and Yellow-fronted Canary. This ended our marathon visit to the northwest and after a good night's rest we headed southwest for the next section of the tour. It was time to move to Choma and enter the habitat for Zambia's only true endemic the striking Chaplin's Barbet.

We arrived at the delightful Masuku Lodge around lunchtime where tame Arnot's Chats frequented the garden and were even nesting inside the house in the lounge! The dam below the lodge held Knob-billed Duck, Little Grebe and Hamerkop and also around the garden were Greater Honeyguide, Southern Masked Weaver, Yellow Bishop, Green-winged Pytilia, Red-billed Firefinch and Blue Waxbill. In the afternoon we headed out into the Nkanga Conservation Area to an area where the scattered Sycamore Fig trees provided the favoured food for the barbet. Success however wasn't instantaneous and our first views of the barbets were of birds disappearing away fast in the opposite direction. Eventually we sussed out a fruiting tree and eventually our quarry surrendered itself for prolonged views. The grasslands also held Red-necked and Swainson's Spurfowls, Grey Go-away-bird, Senegal Coucal, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Greater Blue-eared Starling and Sooty Chat but these strange snowy white barbets iced our cake for us and having had our fill at the end of the day we left them in peace.



Racket-tailed Rollers showed particularly well for us in the Nkanga Conservation Area. (left Nik Borrow, right Phil Tizzard)

We were still missing miombo birds and so the remainder of our time in the Nkanga area was spent flogging the dry woodlands in search of the missing species but quite honestly it was tough going although we did see a number of Racket-tailed Roller and enjoyed repeated viewings of these desirable birds. A Shelley's Francolin was flushed for poor views as it crashed away and we also found Crested Barbet, Golden-tailed and Bearded Woodpeckers, Southern Black Tit, Neddicky, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Stierling's Wren Warbler, Wood Pipit, Black-eared Seedeater and Cabanis's Bunting.

From Masuku we continued southwest to the touristy town of Livingstone where we paid our obligatory visit to Victoria Falls and before long we found ourselves standing on the lip of the chasm of the magnificent gorge itself. This spectacular and breathtaking place still has a stunning affect even after having seen innumerable films or photographs. The falls themselves are incredible, even in the dry season as we now found ourselves and as David Livingstone himself once declared, "On sights as beautiful as this, angels in their flight must have gazed". Here the mighty Zambezi widens to nearly two kilometres broad in the wet season before plunging vertically downwards. As we approached the falls dense clouds of water vapour hung over the area on the Zimbabwean side and the sight of millions of tons of water dropping into chasms over 100 metres deep was awe-inspiring. Rainbows arched through the fine spray before vanishing into the

gorges far below us. There weren't many new birds here for us but we did see Hooded Vulture, African Black Swift, Wire-tailed Swallow, Rock Martin and Red-winged Starling. Afterwards we continued the short distance to our lovely lodge, idyllically set on the banks of the Zambezi itself and we had plenty of time to explore the extensive grounds in the late afternoon.



Even in the dry season Victoria Falls is a spectacular sight and no visit to the country is complete without it! (Nik Borrow)

Next stop was the extremely comfortable Camp Nkwazi situated in an idyllic setting on the mighty Zambezi River that was to be our home for the next two nights and we arrived in time to explore the extensive grounds of the lodge where we found obliging Bearded Scrub Robins hopping around on the lawn and there were also Goliath and Purple Herons, Black Crake, Water Thick-knee, Giant Kingfisher, Lesser Swamp Warbler, Collared Palm Thrush and Jameson's Firefinch.



Some striking species at Camp Nkwazi; Collared Palm Thrush (left) and Bearded Scrub Robin (right). (Phil Tizzard)

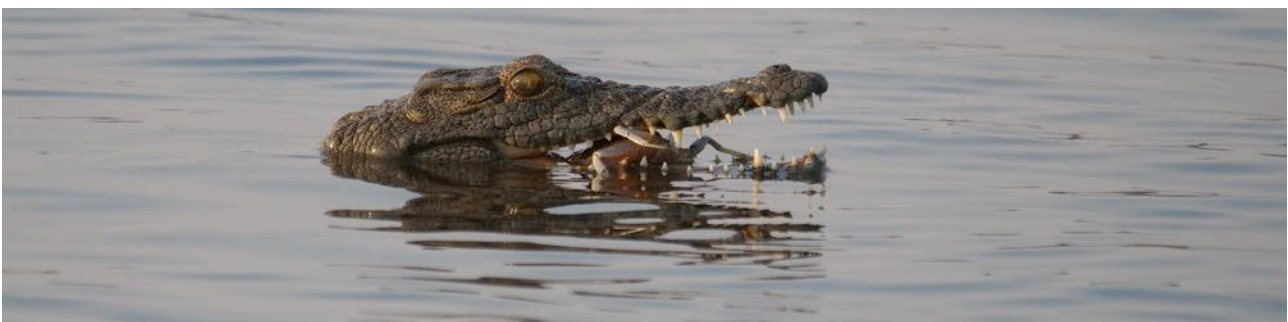
We were primarily at Nkwazi as a base for seeing the next target bird: the virtually endemic and highly restricted range Black-cheeked Lovebird that favours the mopane woodland to the north and west of this area. Our current visit was in the dry season when the species is supposedly easier to see as sometimes large numbers congregate around the dwindling water supplies in the Machile River area. We set off very

early in the morning in our sturdy four wheel drive vehicles which we hoped would be perfect for combatting the sandy tracks that lead into the interior of some very remote country. The journey wasn't completely straightforward as the maze of tracks interweave and some time was lost as we missed the direct road for a while only to find ourselves driving through some extremely remote villages but eventually we reoriented and arrived at the drinking pools where, as hoped for the lovebirds were ready and waiting for us. For the most part the birds seemed to prefer the tallest trees and were sheltering from the hot sun but we also watched them coming down to drink and there were some large groups of these truly delightful birds with as many as 40 counted in one flock alone. We were able to watch them for as long as we wished and enjoyed listening to their shrill calls, studying them as they sheltered in the shady trees or as they descended to drink from the pools which was an amazing experience!



Black-cheeked Lovebird (left) is virtually a Zambian endemic as the records from other countries probably refer to feral birds or wanderers. Some beautiful Southern Carmine Bee-eaters (right) were seen on the journey. (Nik Borrow)

The journey to see this special bird was a long one and having spent some time in the area watching the lovebirds we began the return journey but were able to stop and look at other birds en route. White-browed Sparrow-Weavers were abundant and Red-billed Buffalo Weavers and Meves's and Burchell's Starlings were also common birds along the way whilst at a bush fire we found some beautiful Southern Carmine Bee-eaters attracted to the flames for a roasted meal. Southern Red Bishop and Shaft-tailed Whydahs were in non-breeding dress and during the day we also added Marabou Stork, Crowned Lapwing, Red-faced Mousebird, Southern Red-billed Hornbill, Magpie Shrike, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Red-billed Oxpecker and Black-throated Canary.



Nile Crocodiles eating a crab in the Zambezi. (Nik Borrow)

Our final morning was spent taking a leisurely boat ride on the Zambezi where we hunted out a female African Finfoot that skittered across the water and ran along the bank in front of us upstream whilst a little

further on we encountered the male. Resting on the boulders that broke through the water surface we found Water Thick-knees and dainty Rock Pratincoles whilst on the sandbanks were attractive White-headed Lapwings with some incredibly fierce wing-spurs. Other waterbirds included Egyptian Goose, African Sacred and Glossy Ibises, African Spoonbill, Little Egret, African Darter, some Nile Crocodiles and some real 'wild' mammals that included African Elephant, Cape Buffalo and Hippopotamus.

It was a shame to leave such a delightful place but for some of the group it was the end of this long road trip targeting the Zambian specials and for the rest of us it was a swift and easy transfer across the border to Victoria Falls airport in Zimbabwe where we were supposed to catch an afternoon flight to Harare. Fortunately, we were early only to discover that our scheduled flight was cancelled but some charm school manoeuvring managed to swap us onto another flight and all was well and we arrived in the country's capital on time for an overnight stop.

We had arrived in Zimbabwe at a time when the country was facing a number of shortages, most notably fuel but somehow our local guide made sure that we had enough for the journey and the following day we drove all morning to reach the Vumba highlands by lunchtime. We were staying at the well-known White Horse Inn which is like setting foot into a time warp as it has scarcely changed in the thirty years that Nik has known it and the lush and beautifully kept gardens are a haven for birdwatchers. The Chirinda Apalis is a species that only occurs in these highlands that straddle Zimbabwe and neighbouring Mozambique and was the first of the key species to successfully succumb to our gaze, the gardens being a very convenient place for us to see it. Stripe-cheeked Greenbul is another species that has a restricted distribution only occurring away from these eastern highlands on Mount Mulanje in Malawi and it was seen well in the garden and elsewhere during this extension. Other species new for the trip that afternoon included colourful Livingstone's Turacos as well as Palearctic migrant Steppe Buzzard, Tambourine Dove, African Dusky Flycatcher, Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Bar-throated Apalis and the charming White-starred Robin.



Two species are endemic to the highlands that straddle the border between eastern Zimbabwe and Mozambique; Roberts's Warbler (left) and Chirinda Apalis (right). (Nik Borrow)

The next morning started with Silvery-cheeked Hornbill and Eastern Miombo Sunbird around our hotel but most of the day was spent birding at higher altitudes and we started with a bang with superb close up views of the lovely Swynnerton's Robin in the remnant forest patches. Soon after we were watching a group of Roberts's Warblers, another target species that is endemic to the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe and neighbouring Mozambique. An Orange Ground Thrush was singing sweetly and we obtained excellent views, Olive Bushshrikes were equally noisy but put up more of a fight before we saw them however the most skulking species was the secretive Barratt's Warbler and it took several attempts with different singing birds before we saw this one well. Other forest species seen during the day included Lemon Dove, Cape Batis and White-tailed Crested Flycatcher whilst in the late afternoon we turned our attention to birds of more open country and the grasslands where we found White-necked Raven, Cape Robin-Chat, Cape Grassbird, Wailing Cisticola, African Yellow Warbler, Bronzy Sunbird, Yellow-bellied Waxbill and Cape Canary.

On our final full day, we visited an area of miombo in the morning which proved to be quite productive and we finally connected with a very fine Miombo Rock Thrush. Whyte's Barbet was seen briefly and the rocky outcrops produced Familiar Chat, Lazy Cisticola and Cape Bunting. The middle of the day was too hot for birding but after lunch we returned to the Vumba where we managed to tease out a few more species. A Crowned Eagle was displaying over our hotel and in the forest some people glimpsed Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon and Olive Thrush but we all enjoyed some marvellous views of Red-faced Crimsonwing and we finished the day watching a pair of Striped Pipits in the miombo near our hotel.



We had excellent views of African Spotted Creeper in both Zambia and Zimbabwe. (Nik Borrow)

The drive back to Harare was uneventful until we ran out of fuel 20 kilometres short of the airport. The fuel shortages in the country meant that we had not managed to obtain quite enough to get us back and there were some anxious moments while we waited for our driver and local guide to go off in search of some on the black market. The enforced stop did have one fortuitous by-product of there being a couple of Purple-crested Turacos that put in a brief appearance whilst we were waiting and all ended happily as fuel was purchased, the vehicle topped up and we all got to the airport on time!

This had been a massive road trip covering two countries and geared up to search out some of the far-flung endemics and specialties of the region which we currently do not see on other tours. For the most part we had been successful in twitching some of these remarkable birds. The miombo had been hard work as it often can but we had persevered enough to make sure that we had seen the best of what these countries had to offer.



The gorgeous little Swynnerton's Robin is one of the star attractions in the Vumba Mountains in Zimbabwe. (Nik Borrow)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

BIRDS

Total of bird species recorded: 382

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* Flocks were seen at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* Small numbers at Kafue Lodge and Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Small numbers at Masuku and Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*. Just a couple at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa* 3 were on the river at Mutanda, Zambia.

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata* A pair at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Shelley's Francolin *Scleroptila shelleyi* 1 was flushed in the Nkanga Conservation Area, Zambia.

Natal Spurfowl *Pternistis natalensis* (NL) Seen by some in the Machile area and heard at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Red-necked Spurfowl (R-n Francolin) *Pternistis afer* Seen at Nkanga, Zambia and heard in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Swainson's Spurfowl (S Francolin) *Pternistis swainsonii* Seen at Masuku and in the Machile area, Zambia.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 1 on the dam at Masuku, Zambia.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* Seen at Kafue Lodge and Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Woolly-necked Stork (African Woollyneck) *Ciconia [episcopus] microscelis* 1 was seen at Hillwood, Zambia.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer* A few were seen in the Nkwazi/Machile area, Zambia.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Small numbers at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Hadada Ibis (Hadeda I) *Bostrychia hagedash* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Small numbers at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* Small numbers at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Small numbers at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Striated Heron (Striated H) *Butorides striata* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Rufous-bellied Heron *Ardeola rufiventris* 2 at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Small numbers at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* Small numbers and widespread sightings in Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* 1 at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Singletons at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Small numbers at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* Seen at Masuku and in the southwest in Zambia.

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*. Seen well at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* A few widespread sightings in Zambia.

African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene) *Polyboroides typus* Just 2 sightings (1 from each country) throughout the tour.

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* 2 seen around Livingstone, Zambia.

White-backed Vulture (African W-b V) *Gyps africanus*. 2 seen at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Black-chested Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis* Singletons at Hillwood and Nkanga, Zambia.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus* 5 widespread sightings in Zambia.

Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens* Singletons at Mutanda and Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* Small numbers in the Mwinilunga area and also at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus* (NL) 1 for Phil and Chris at Mwinilunga, Zambia.

Crowned Eagle (African C E) *Stephanoaetus coronatus* (LO). 1 for Nik over the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* Small numbers in the Mwinilunga area and Nkanga, Zambia.

African Hawk-Eagle *Aquila spilogaster* 1 juvenile en route to Mwinilunga, Zambia.

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* Widespread sightings, often on roadside wires in Zambia.

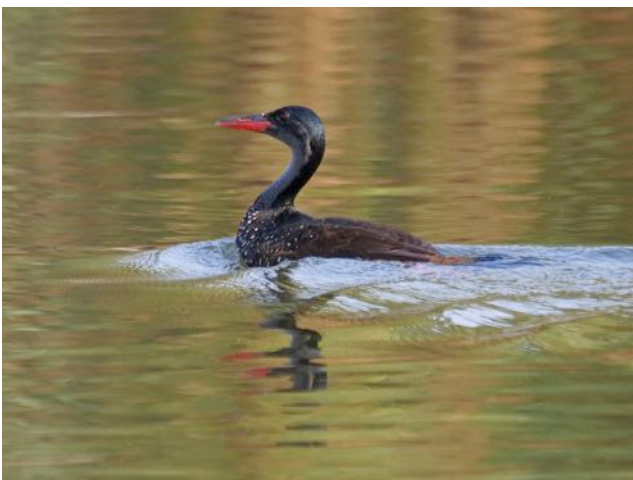
Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* (NL) 2 sightings in Zambia.

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates* (NL) 1 for Phil en route to Nkanga, Zambia.

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro* A large female at Nchila Wildlife Reserve, Zambia.

Shikra (Little Banded Goshawk) *Accipiter badius* 2 sightings in Zambia.

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus* 1 at Nkanga and another at Nkwazi, Zambia.



African Finfoot (left) and Water Thick-knees (right) were seen during the Zambezi boat trip. (Nik Borrow)

Black Sparrowhawk (Great S) *Accipiter melanoleucus* 1 seen well at Mutanda, Zambia.

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* Seen at Kafue Lodge and Chitunta Plain, Zambia.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius* Common throughout Zambia but absent in Zimbabwe.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*. A few seen at Masuku and Nkwazi, Zambia.

Common Buzzard (Steppe B) *Buteo [buteo] vulpinus* A few of these Palearctic migrants in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

White-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura pulchra* (H) Heard at Hillwood Farm, Zambia.

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* Great views of both sexes at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra* A few widespread sightings in Zambia.

Black-rumped Buttonquail *Turnix nanus* A pair was flushed on the Hillwood Plain, Zambia.

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus* Seen well on the Zambezi at Nkwazi, Zambia.

Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus* Seen at Kafue Lodge and in the Machile area, Zambia.

White-crowned Lapwing *Vanellus albiceps* Easily seen during the Zambezi boat trip.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus* Seen well in the Machile area, Zambia.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*. 2 sightings of this Palearctic migrant in northwestern Zambia.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant in Zambia.

Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii* 5 were seen well on the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.

Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* Easy to see during the Zambezi boat trip.

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia* Mostly domestic or 'table' birds.

Afep Pigeon *Columba unicincta*. Small numbers seen in flight in the Mwinilunga/Hillwood area, Zambia.

Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon *Columba delegorguei* Views for some in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Western Bronze-naped Pigeon *Columba iriditorques* Views for some in the Mwinilunga/Hillwood area, Zambia.

Lemon Dove *Columba larvata* Heard at the Source of the Zambezi, Zambia and seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Common and widespread in Zambia but absent from Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Ring-necked Dove (Cape Turtle D) *Streptopelia capicola* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* A few sightings mainly on journeys in Zambia.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* Widespread sightings in drier areas in both countries.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer* Widespread sightings in wetter areas in both countries.

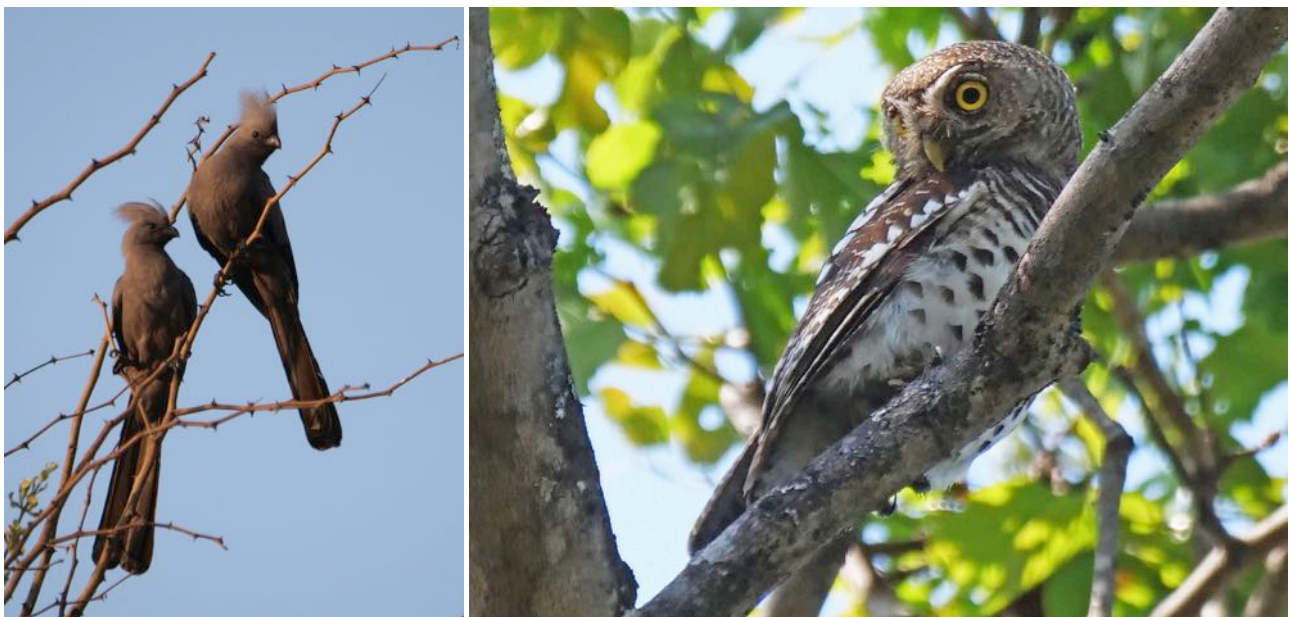
Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria* 2 seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Most numerous in the Machile area, Zambia.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

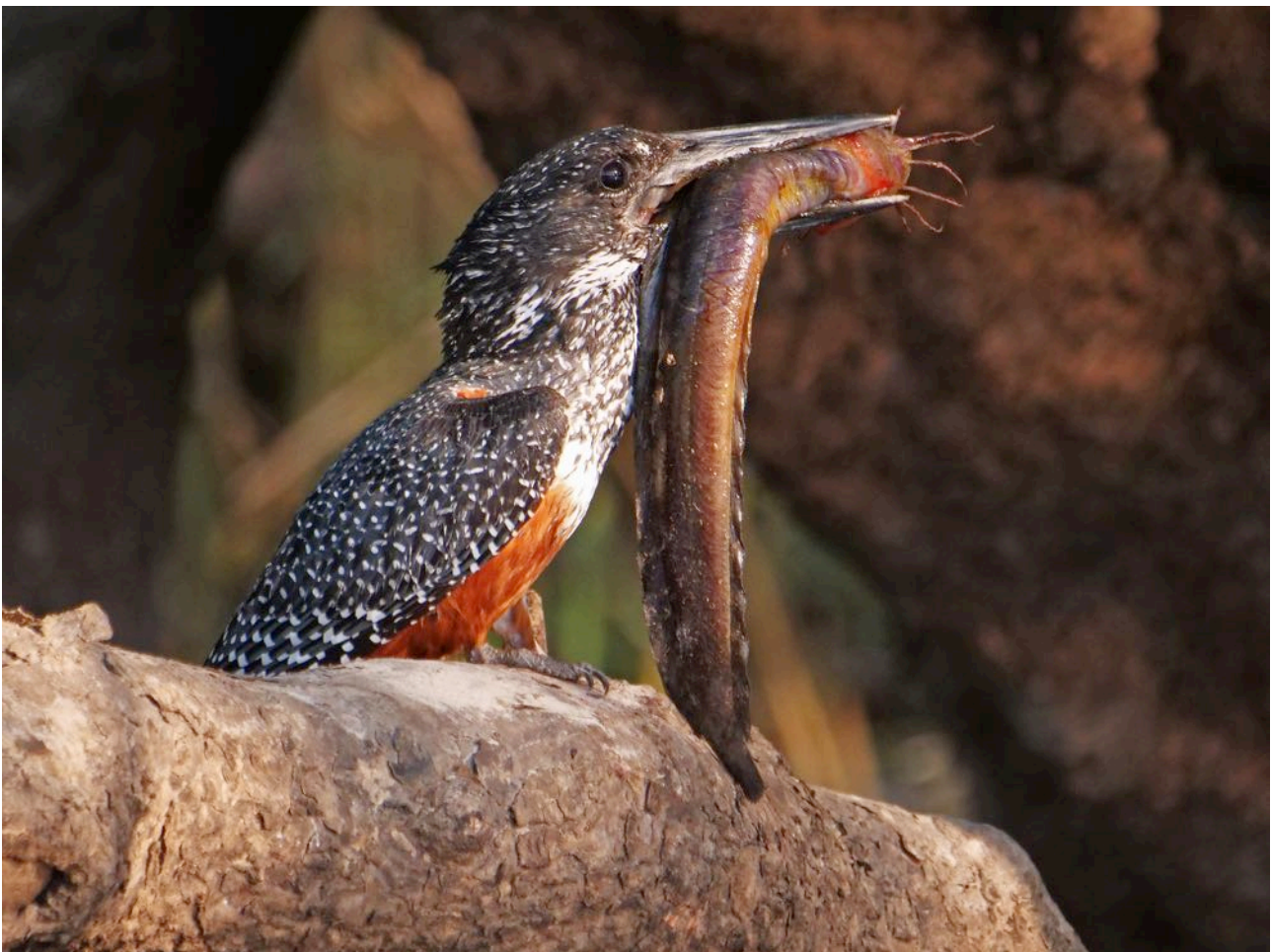
Schalow's Turaco *Tauraco schalowi* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Purple-crested Turaco *Tauraco porphyreolophus* 2 were seen by Nik and Phil in Harare, Zimbabwe.



Grey Go-away-birds (left) in the Machile River area and an African Barred Owlet (right) in Luakera Forest. (Nik Borrow)

Ross's Turaco *Musophaga rossae* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
 Grey Go-away-bird *Corythaixoides concolor* Seen well at Nkanga and the Machile area, Zambia.
 Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis* Small numbers seen at Nkanga, Zambia.
 Coppery-tailed Coucal *Centropus cupreicaudus* Mostly only heard at the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.
 White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
 Blue Malkoha *Ceuthmochares aereus* 2 sightings at Hillwood and Source of the Zambezi, Zambia.
 Levillant's Cuckoo *Clamator levillantii* 3 seen in the Luakera Forest, Zambia.
 Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoccyx audeberti* 2 sightings in the Mwinilunga area, Zambia.
 Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* Heard more often than seen in both countries.
 African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus* (H) Heard only in both countries.
 Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
 Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* Heard more often than seen in both countries.
 African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
 Common Cuckoo (Eurasian C) *Cuculus canorus* 1 was identified in the Luakera Forest, Zambia.
 African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis* (H) Heard calling from across the river at Mwinilunga, Zambia.
 Pel's Fishing Owl *Scotopelia peli* Seen at night at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.
 African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* Seen well pre-dawn at Kafue Lodge, Zambia and heard elsewhere.
 Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* (H, LO) Heard at night by Nik at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.
 African Barred Owlet *Glaucidium capense* Seen well by all in daylight in the Mwinilunga/Hillwood area, Zambia.
 Fiery-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus pectoralis* (H) Heard at widespread localities in Zambia.
 Swamp Nightjar (Natal N) *Caprimulgus natalensis* 1 flushed in daylight at Chitunta Plain, Zambia.
 Square-tailed Nightjar (Gabon N) *Caprimulgus fossii* Seen well at night at Kafue Lodge.
 African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Common, with widespread sightings in both countries.
 African Black Swift *Apus barbatus* (NL) Phil saw some distant birds at Victoria Falls.
 Little Swift *Apus affinis* Common, with widespread sightings in both countries.
 White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* A few seen at Kafue Lodge and Mutanda, Zambia.



Female Giant Kingfisher with a giant fish to match during the Zambezi boat trip. (Nik Borrow)

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* Common, with widespread sightings in both countries.
Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* Small numbers seen in the Machile area, Zambia.
Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina* Seen well in the Nchila Wildlife Reserve, Zambia.
Racket-tailed Roller *Coracias spatulatus* Excellent views of 8+ birds at Nkanga, Zambia.
Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris* Widespread sightings in both countries.
Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti*. Mostly heard but seen easily at Nkanga, Zambia.
Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica* (H) Heard in the Nchila Wildlife Reserve, Zambia.
African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta* (NL) 1 seen by Chris at Mutanda, Zambia.
Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Half-collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquata* Singletons en route to Mwinilunga and during the Zambezi boat trip.
Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* Superb views during the Zambezi boat trip.
Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus* Seen well in the Mwinilunga and Machile areas, Zambia.
Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Blue-breasted Bee-eater *Merops variegatus* Small numbers on the plains north of Mwinilunga, Zambia.
European Bee-eater (Eurasian B-e) *Merops apiaster* Palearctic migrants on the move in both countries.
Southern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicoides* Stunning birds seen well in the Machile area, Zambia.
African Hoopoe *Upupa africana* Widespread encounters in both countries.
Green Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus* Seen well at Kafue Lodge and Nkanga, Zambia.
Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* Seen well at Kafue Lodge and Nkanga, Zambia.
Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri* Sightings at Luakera Forest, Nkanga and Machile area, Zambia.
Southern Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus rufirostris* Common in the Machile area, Zambia.
Crowned Hornbill *Lophoceros alboterminatus* Widespread encounters in both countries.
African Grey Hornbill *Lophoceros nasutus* Seen from Nkanga into the southwest of Zambia.
Pale-billed Hornbill *Lophoceros pallidirostris* Good looks from Kafue Lodge up into the northwest of Zambia.
Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator* Seen well at Kafue Lodge and Nkanga, Zambia.
Silvery-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes brevis* Easily seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.
Whyte's Barbet *Stactolaema whytii* 1 was seen at Cecil Kop, Zimbabwe.
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird (Golden-r T) *Pogoniulus bilineatus* Widespread encounters in both countries.
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* Widespread encounters in both countries.
Miombo Pied Barbet *Tricholaema frontata* 2 were seen in the Mwinilunga area, Zambia.
Chaplin's Barbet *Lybius chaplini* Wonderful views of Zambia's endemic barbet at Nkanga.
Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus* Widespread encounters in both countries.
Black-backed Barbet *Lybius minor* We all saw the bird at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.
Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii* Good views were obtained at Nkanga, Zambia.
Green-backed Honeybird (Eastern H) *Prodotiscus zambesiae* 1 was seen in the Luakera Forest, Zambia.
Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor* Widespread encounters in both countries.
Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus* (LO) Seen Kafue Lodge, Zambia, heard in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.
Greater Honeyguide (Black-throated H) *Indicator indicator* A male at Masuku, Zambia.
Bennett's Woodpecker *Campethera bennettii* 1 at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.
Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni* Singletons at Kafue Lodge, Zambia and Cecil Kop, Zimbabwe.
Green-backed Woodpecker (Little Spotted W) *Campethera cailliautii*. Sightings in the far northwest and Mutanda.
Bearded Woodpecker *Chloropicus namaquus* 1 at Nkanga, Zambia.
Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*. An early Palearctic migrant at Mwinilunga, Zambia.
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (NL) 1 seen by some at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.
Brown-necked Parrot (Grey-headed P) *Poicephalus [fuscicollis] suahelicus* Seen in flight over Luakera Forest.
Meyer's Parrot (Brown P) *Poicephalus meyeri* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Black-cheeked Lovebird *Agapornis nigrigenis* 100+ seen well in the Machile River area, Zambia.
African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis* Seen well at Kafue Lodge and heard at Nkanga, Zambia.



Black-backed Barbet (left) and African Broadbill (right) at Kafue Lodge (Nik Borrow)

Margaret's Batis *Batis margaritae* At least 5 seen south of Mwinilunga, Zambia.

Cape Batis *Batis capensis* Easily seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata* Heard at Mwinilunga and seen at Mutanda, Zambia.

Grey-headed Bushshrike *Malaconotus blanchoti* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Black-fronted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons* Seen south of Mwinilunga, heard at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Olive Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus olivaceus* A pair seen and others heard in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Orange-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* Widespread encounters in both countries.

Gorgeous Bushshrike (Perrin's B) *Telophorus [viridis] viridis* Excellent views south of Mwinilunga, Zambia.

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* Widespread encounters in both countries.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus* Widespread encounters in both countries.

Black-backed Puffback (Southern P) *Dryoscopus cubla* A very common bird in both countries.

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius major* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Brubru *Nilaus afer* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

White-crested Helmetshrike *Prionops plumatus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Retz's Helmetshrike *Prionops retzii* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

White-breasted Cuckooshrike *Cebilepyris pectoralis* Small numbers in the Mwinilunga area, Zambia.

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava* 4 seen together in the Luakera Forest, Zambia.

Purple-throated Cuckooshrike *Campephaga quiscalina* (NL) 2 sightings in the far northwest of Zambia.

Maggie Shrike *Urolestes melanoleucus* 2 were seen in the Machile area, Zambia.

Northern Fiscal *Lanius humeralis* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Southern Fiscal *Lanius collaris* 1 seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii* South of Mwinilunga and Mutanda, Zambia and in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Widespread sightings in both countries.

White-necked Raven *Corvus albicollis* 1 in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

White-tailed Crested Flycatcher *Elminia albonotata* Small numbers seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

White-winged Black Tit *Melaniparus leucomelas* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Southern Black Tit *Melaniparus niger* Seen well from Nkanga into southwest Zambia.

Rufous-bellied Tit *Melaniparus rufiventris* A few seen at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Miombo Tit (M Grey T) *Melaniparus griseiventris* Seen in miombo in both countries.

Grey Penduline Tit (African P T) *Anthoscopus caroli* A few seen at Kafue Lodge and Nkanga, Zambia.

Flappet Lark *Mirafr rufocinnamomea* Sightings in the far northwest and Nkanga, Zambia.

Angolan Lark *Mirafr angolensis* It took some time but we finally tracked one down on the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea*. Several large flocks seen in the far northwest of Zambia.

Dark-capped Bulbul (Common B) *Pycnonotus tricolor* A very common bird in both countries.

Stripe-cheeked Greenbul *Arizelocichla milanjensis* Small numbers seen well in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Little Greenbul *Eurillas virens* Heard more often than seen at Kafue Lodge and the far northwest of Zambia.

Sombre Greenbul *Andropadus importunus* 1 seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon indicator* Heard by all and seen by some at Hillwood Farm, Zambia.

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Yellow-throated Leaflove *Atimastillas flavicollis* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Terrestrial Brownbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Grey-olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris* Eventually seen well at Mutanda, Zambia.

Cabanis's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cabanisi*. 1 seen at the Source of the Zambezi, Zambia.

Yellow-streaked Greenbul *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus* Small numbers seen well in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Black-collared Bulbul *Neolestes torquatus* A pair was seen well at Hillwood Farm, Zambia.

Black Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne pristoptera* Seen in far northwestern Zambia and in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga* (NL) Seen by Phil at Sakeji.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Only seen in southwestern Zambia.

Black-and-rufous Swallow *Hirundo nigrorufa* 20+ were seen on our first morning on the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Seen at Victoria Falls and in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* Widespread sightings of these Palearctic migrants in Zambia.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Red-breasted Swallow (Rufous-chested S) *Cecropis semirufa* (NL) Phil saw 1 at Nkanga, Zambia.

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Red-throated Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon rufigula* Seen well en route to Mwinilunga.

Moustached Grass Warbler (African M W) *Melocichla mentalis* Seen well en route to Mwinilunga.



Magpie Shrike (left) in the Machile River area and Lazy Cisticola (right) at Cecil Kop in Zimbabwe. (Nik Borrow)

Cape Grassbird *Sphenoeacus afer* 1 was seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Red-capped Crombec *Sylvietta ruficapilla* Only glimpsed in the miombo of northwestern Zambia.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus ruficapilla* Seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Laura's Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus laurae* 1 was seen well in Nchila Wildlife Reserve, Zambia.

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* Seen at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

African Yellow Warbler *Iduna natalensis* Phil saw 1 at Mutanda, Zambia. Another in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Bamboo Warbler *Locustella alfredi* Amazing views of 1 en route to Mwinilunga.

Fan-tailed Grassbird *Catriscus brevirostris* (NL) Phil saw 1 on the Chitunta Plain.

Barratt's Warbler *Bradypterus barratti* 3 were seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops* Heard more often than seen at widespread localities in Zambia.

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans* (H) Heard in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Trilling Cisticola *Cisticola woosnami* Seen well in the Luakera Forest, Zambia.

Lazy Cisticola *Cisticola aberrans* 4+ seen at Cecil Kop, Zimbabwe.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* Seen well at Nkanga and in the Machile area, Zambia.

Wailing Cisticola *Cisticola lais* 1 seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Luapula Cisticola *Cisticola luapula* Seen well at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Levaillant's Cisticola (Tinkling C) *Cisticola tinniens* Seen well on the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Short-winged Cisticola (Siffling C) *Cisticola brachypterus* Seen in the Hillwood area, Zambia.

Neddicky (Piping Cisticola) *Cisticola fulvicapilla* Just 1 was seen at Nkanga, Zambia.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* Seen on the Chitunta Plain and Nkanga, Zambia.

Dambo Cisticola *Cisticola dambo* Common in the far northwestern dambos of Zambia.

Wing-snapping Cisticola *Cisticola ayresii* Seen on the northwestern plains of Zambia.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* Widespread sightings in both countries.

White-chinned Prinia *Schistolais leucopogon*. Seen well at Mutanda and Hillwood Farm, Zambia.

Roberts's Warbler *Oreophilais robertsi* Easily seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Bar-throated Apalis *Apalis thoracica* Easily seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flava* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Chirinda Apalis *Apalis chirindensis* Easily seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Buff-throated Apalis *Apalis rufogularis* We all saw the birds at the Source of the Zambezi, Zambia.

Brown-headed Apalis *Apalis alticola* Easily seen at Mutanda, Zambia.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Miombo Wren-Warbler (Pale W W) *Calamonastes undosus* Good views in the Mwinilunga area.

Stierling's Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes stierlingi* Good views at Nkanga, Zambia.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis* 2 seen in miombo at the Source of the Zambezi, Zambia.

Green-capped Eremomela *Eremomela scotops* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Burnt-necked Eremomela *Eremomela usticollis* 4 seen in the Machile area, Zambia.

Black-necked Eremomela *Eremomela atricollis* Excellent views in miombo in the Mwinilunga area.



Brown-headed Apalis (left) at Mutanda and Black-necked Eremomela (right) in the Luakera Forest. (Nik Borrow)

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Hartlaub's Babbler *Turdoides hartlaubii* Seen near Mwinilunga and in the Machile area.

African Yellow White-eye (Southern Y W) *Zosterops [senegalensis] anderssoni* Widespread sightings throughout.

Yellow-bellied Hyliota *Hyliota flavigaster* (NL) Just a couple of positive sightings in Zambia.

Southern Hyliota *Hyliota australis* Several seen in northwestern Zambia and Cecil Kop in Zimbabwe.

African Spotted Creeper *Salpornis salvadori* Singletons near Mwinilunga, Zambia and Cecil Kop in Zimbabwe.

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* Small numbers seen at Nkanga, Zambia.

Miombo Blue-eared Starling (Southern B-e S) *Lamprotornis elisabeth* Most numerous at Nkanga, Zambia.

Splendid Starling *Lamprotornis splendidus* Just 3 seen en route to Mwinilunga.

Meves's Starling *Lamprotornis mevesii* Common in the Machile area, Zambia.

Burchell's Starling *Lamprotornis australis* Common in the Machile area, Zambia.

Sharp-tailed Starling *Lamprotornis acuticaudus* Just 2 sightings in northwestern Zambia.

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* Widespread sightings of this glorious bird in both countries.

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio* Common at Victoria Falls and in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* Small numbers seen in southwestern Zambia.

Fraser's Rufous Thrush *Stizorhina fraseri* (NL) Seen by Chris and Phil at the Source of the Zambezi.

Orange Ground Thrush *Geokichla gurneyi* Excellent views in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

African Thrush *Turdus pelios* The race *stormsi* seen well in Zambia.

Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libonyana* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Olive Thrush *Turdus olivaceus* 1 glimpsed in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Bearded Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas quadrivirgata* Good views at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia and Cecil Kop in Zimbabwe.

Miombo Scrub Robin (Central Bearded S R) *Cercotrichas barbata* Seen well at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Widespread encounters in both countries.

Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured F) *Myioparus plumbeus* Kafue Lodge, Zambia and the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Pale Flycatcher *Melaenornis pallidus* A few widespread sightings in Zambia.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant in northwestern Zambia.

Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Cassin's Flycatcher *Muscicapa cassini* A pair was seen well en route to Mwinilunga.

African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta* Just seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Cape Robin-Chat *Cossypha caffra* 1 seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Grey-winged Robin-Chat *Cossypha polioptera* Singletons in Nchila Wildlife Reserve and at the Source, Zambia.

White-browed Robin-Chat *Cossypha heuglini* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Red-capped Robin-Chat *Cossypha natalensis* Seen at the Source, Zambia and again in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Swynnerton's Robin *Swynnertonia swynnertoni*. Wonderful views of this beauty in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

White-starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata* Excellent views in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Bocage's Akalat *Sheppardia bocagei* A skulking bird seen well at Mutanda, Zambia.

Collared Palm Thrush (C Morning T) *Cichladusa arquata* Good views at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant in northwestern Zambia.

Miombo Rock Thrush *Monticola angolensis* Finally seen well at Cecil Kop in Zimbabwe.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Sooty Chat *Myrmecocichla nigra* Easily seen at Nkanga, Zambia.

Arnot's Chat (White-headed Black C) *Myrmecocichla arnoti* Easily seen at Kafue Lodge and Nkanga, Zambia.

Familiar Chat (Red-tailed C) *Oenanthe familiaris* 2 seen at Cecil Kop in Zimbabwe.

Western Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes longuemarei* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Bannerman's Sunbird *Cyanomitra bannermani* Great sightings of both sexes at Hillwood Farm, Zambia.



Arnot's Chats (left) are easy to see at Nkanga Conservation Area. Bannerman's Sunbird (right) is a scarce specialty found at Hillwood Farm. (Nik Borrow)

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Green-throated Sunbird *Chalcomitra rubescens* A pair seen at Hillwood Farm, Zambia.

Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystina* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Bronzy Sunbird *Nectarinia kilimensis*. 1 male seen in the Vumba Highlands, Zimbabwe.

Eastern Miombo Sunbird (M Double-collared S) *Cinnyris manoensis* Seen well in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Shelley's Sunbird *Cinnyris shelleyi* A fine male was seen well at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

White-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris talatala* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus* Seen at Hillwood Farm, Zambia and again in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Bates's Sunbird *Cinnyris batesi* At least 1 was seen at Hillwood Farm, Zambia.

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus* Small numbers seen at Hillwood Farm, Zambia.

Yellow-throated Petronia *Gymnoris superciliaris* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* Very common in the Machile area, Zambia.

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali* Abundant in the Machile area, Zambia.

Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak W) *Amblyospiza albifrons* 1 seen at Nkwazi, Zambia.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis* Widespread encounters in both countries.

Holub's Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* Seen at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus* Seen at Nkanga, Zambia.

Village Weaver (Black-headed W) *Ploceus cucullatus* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Dark-backed Weaver (Forest W) *Ploceus bicolor* Widespread sightings in both countries.

Bar-winged Weaver *Ploceus angolensis* Just 2 sightings in the Luakera Forest, Zambia.

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* Widespread sightings in Zambia.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* Widespread sightings in non-breeding plumage in Zambia.

Black-winged Red Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus* Widespread sightings in non-breeding plumage in Zambia.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix* Seen in non-breeding plumage in the Machile area, Zambia.

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis* Seen in non-breeding plumage at Nkanga, Zambia.

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes macroura* Widespread sightings in non-breeding plumage in Zambia.

Marsh Widowbird *Euplectes hartlaubi* Seen in non-breeding plumage in northwestern Zambia.

Orange-winged Pytilia *Pytilia afra* A few sightings in northwestern Zambia.

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* Seen at Nkanga and in southwestern Zambia.

Red-faced Crimsonwing *Cryptospiza reichenovii* Excellent views in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.

Red-throated Twinspot *Hypargos niveoguttatus* Seen at Kafue Lodge, Zambia and in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.



Male Red-faced Crimsonwing (left) and female Red-throated Twinspot (right) in the Vumba Mountains, Zimbabwe. (Nik Borrow)

Brown Firefinch *Lagonosticta nitidula* Small numbers at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* Seen at Nkanga and in southwestern Zambia.

African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata* Small numbers seen en route to Mwinilunga.

Jameson's Firefinch *Lagonosticta rhodopareia* A pair at Camp Nkwazi, Zambia.
Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis*. Seen at Nkanga and southwestern Zambia and Zimbabwe.
Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Coccorygia quartinia*. Small numbers seen in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.
Grey Waxbill (Black-tailed G W) *Estrilda perreini* Small numbers at Mutanda and Hillwood Farm, Zambia.
Fawn-breasted Waxbill *Estrilda paludicola* Small flocks in far northwestern Zambia.
Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* Seen at Kafue Lodge, Zambia and in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.
Locust Finch *Paludipasser locustella* Good numbers on the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.
Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata* Widespread sightings in both countries.
Red-backed Mannikin *Lonchura nigriceps* Widespread sightings in both countries.
Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Everyone saw the flock at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.
Shaft-tailed Whydah *Vidua regia* Seen in non-breeding plumage in the Machile area, Zambia.
Cuckoo-finch (Parasitic Weaver) *Anomalospiza imberbis* A pair was seen well on the Hillwood Plain.
Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara* (NL) Seen by some en route to Mwinilunga.
Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis* Seen at Chitunta Plain and Kafue Lodge, Zambia.
African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Fülleborn's Longclaw *Macronyx fuelleborni* Easy to see in northwestern Zambia.
Rosy-throated Longclaw *Macronyx ameliae* Small numbers on the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.
Grimwood's Longclaw *Macronyx grimwoodi* Small numbers on the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.
African Pipit (Grassland P) *Anthus cinnamomeus* Small numbers on the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.
Wood Pipit *Anthus nyassae* Seen well at Nkanga, Zambia.
Buffy Pipit *Anthus vaalensis* Small numbers on the Chitunta Plain, Zambia.
Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys* Small numbers in far northwestern Zambia.
Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris* Great views of a pair in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.
Black-faced Canary *Crithagra capistrata* Good views at Kafue Lodge and Mutanda, Zambia.
Black-throated Canary *Crithagra atrogularis* Small numbers in the Machile area, Zambia.
Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica* Seen at Kafue Lodge, Zambia and in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.
Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphurata* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Black-eared Seedeater *Crithagra mennelli*. 2 at Kafue Lodge, Zambia and 1 at Cecil Kop, Zimbabwe.
Cape Canary *Serinus canicollis* Small numbers in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.
Cape Bunting *Emberiza capensis* Seen at Cecil Kop, Zimbabwe.
Golden-breasted Bunting (African G-b B) *Emberiza flaviventris* Widespread sightings in Zambia.
Cabanis's Bunting *Emberiza cabanisi* 1 at Nkanga, Zambia and 1 at Cecil Kop, Zimbabwe.

MAMMALS

Total of mammal species recorded: 19

African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* Seen on the Zimbabwe side of the Zambezi from Camp Nkwazi.
Thick-tailed Greater Galago *Otolemur crassicaudatus* (H) Heard at Kafue Lodge and Nkwazi, Zambia.
Blue Monkey *Cercopithecus mitis* Also known as Samango Monkey was easy to see in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.
Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus* Seen from Nkanga to southwestern Zambia and heard in the Vumba, Zimbabwe.
Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis* Seen at Kafue Lodge and Nkwazi, Zambia.
Smith's Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus cepapi* Seen in the Machile area, Zambia.
Central African Large-spotted Genet (Blotched G) *Genetta maculata* (LO) Nik saw one at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.
Plains Zebra *Equus quagga* 'Ranch' animals only.
Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* Easy to see on the Zambezi.
Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* Easy to see at Nkanga, Zambia.
Cape Buffalo *Syncerus caffer* Seen on the Zimbabwe side of the Zambezi from Camp Nkwazi.
Sable Antelope *Hippotragus niger* 'Ranch' animals only, Nchila Wildlife Reserve, Zambia.
Roan Antelope *Hippotragus equinus* 'Ranch' animals only, Nchila Wildlife Reserve, Zambia.
Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* Probably 'Ranch' animals only at Nkanga, Zambia.
Puku *Kobus vardonii* 'Ranch' animals only.
Oribi *Ourebia ourebi* 'Ranch' animals only.
Common Eland *Tragelaphus oryx* 'Ranch' animals only, Nchila Wildlife Reserve, Zambia.

Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*. Seen at Kafue Lodge, Zambia.

Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* Probably 'Ranch' animals only at Nkanga, Zambia.



Our tour took us from the wide open plains in northwestern Zambia (left) to the Vumba Mountains in Zimbabwe (right). (Nik Borrow)