



COMPLETE ANGOLA BIRDING TOUR: RARE ENDEMIC AND MORE

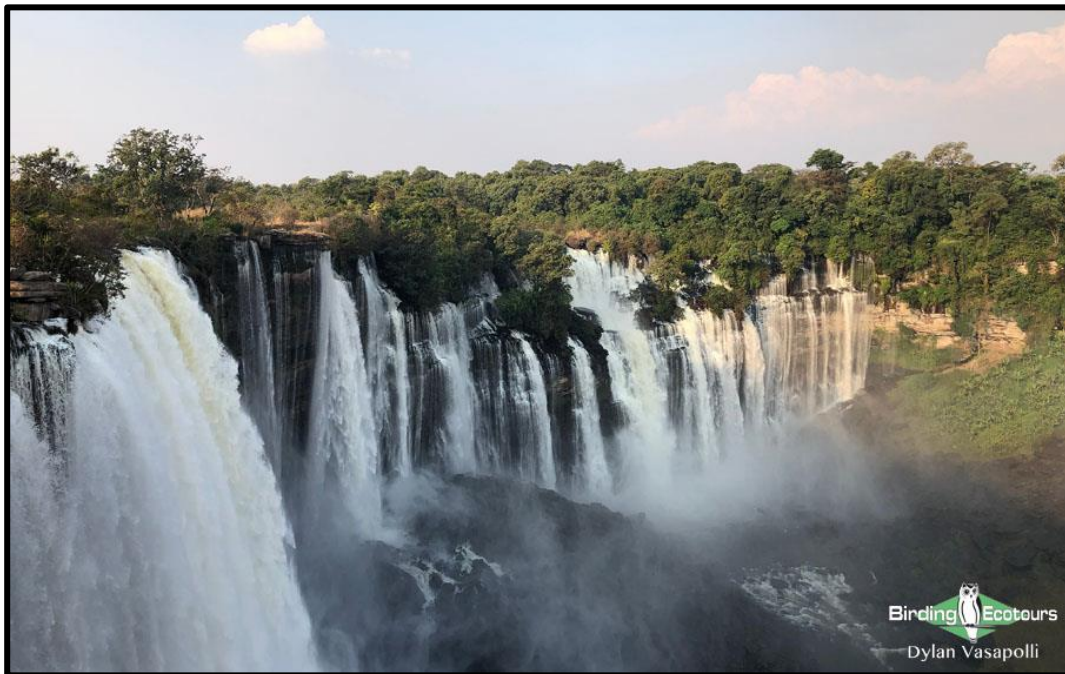
23 JUNE-09 JULY 2027



Swierstra's Spurfowl is one of Angola's more challenging-to-find endemic birds.

Overview

Since Angola's three-decade-long civil war ended in 2002, the country has enjoyed peace and stability, along with a massive surge in infrastructural advancements, opening the country up to tourism (much to the delight of birders, who want to see its 1,000+ bird species, including many endemics and other speciality species). During the initial post-war years, Angola was deemed to be a country only for 'hard-core' tourists, and even the few birding tours available were typically overland camping adventures. Fortunately, this has changed dramatically. While a sense of adventure is still required, an ever-improving road network makes this country easier to traverse and, with suitable accommodation options available along the entire route, **this tour has no overland camping**. Angola is, without a doubt, one of the finest birding countries in Africa and a destination not to be missed by any world birder.



The spectacular Kalandula Falls are a sight to behold, and conveniently offer some excellent birding nearby!

This comprehensive tour takes us through the western parts of the country and to all the key birding areas. Beginning in the capital, Luanda, we venture to the remote scarp forests in the north of the country, where we will try for our first endemic, the handsome **Braun's Bushshrike**. A visit to the spectacular Kalandula Falls and their exciting swamp forests follows, before calling in at the dry woodlands of the Kissama National Park outside Luanda. We progressively make our way southwards through the country, visiting the disappearing forests of Kumbira and Mount Moco, along with the disappearing miombo woodland between them. We end up in the southern city, Lubango, which opens up the stunning Tundavala Escarpment and its host of endemics, along with the nearby Namib Desert (hosting almost all of the Namibia near-

endemics we get on our Namibian tours as well). Working our way up the west coast, we return to Luanda, where this tour comes to an end.

This well-designed and efficient route gives us a chance for all the country's endemics, near-endemics, and specials, including such rare and poorly known species as **Gabela** and **Monteiro's Bushshrikes**, **Gabela Helmetshrike**, **White-headed Robin-Chat**, **Swierstra's Spurfowl**, **Red-crested Turaco**, **White-fronted Wattle-eye**, **Pulitzer's Longbill**, **Angola Slaty Flycatcher**, **Angola Cave Chat**, **Gabela Akalat**, **Bocage's Sunbird** and **Angola Waxbill**.



*Angola's national bird is the endemic **Red-crested Turaco** – while it can be difficult to find at times, we have several chances to see this handsome species.*

Many other more widespread species are also best sought within Angola and include the likes of **Anchieta's Barbet**, **Margaret's Batis**, **Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye**, **Angola Lark**, **Black-and-rufous Swallow**, **Black-necked Eremomela**, **Black-collared Bulbul**, **Falkenstein's Greenbul**, **Bubbling Cisticola**, **Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush** and **Dusky Twinspot**. Not to mention all the more typical Namibian near-endemics, which can also be expected.

This tour can be combined with our São Tomé and Príncipe birding tour immediately after, as there are direct flights from Luanda to these endemic-rich islands.

Detailed Itinerary (17 days/16 nights)

Day 0. Arrival into Luanda

As we begin the tour early on Day 1, we require you to be in Luanda this day (the day before).

*Please note that we do include the hotel room cost, airport transfer and dinner for this evening,

in the tour cost (to make this easy for all tour participants) but nothing else. We will aim to meet up this evening for dinner.

This day is not part of the tour cost generally, we will not have access to the tour vehicle, no birding is included, and the tour leader will only be arriving for the evening dinner.

Overnight: Luanda

Day 1. Luanda to Uige

We have an early start, as we venture north out of this bustling city, bound for the remote northern forests near to Uige. This drive will take several hours, and we will break it up with several birding stops along the route, giving us our first birds. Our first stop is likely to be a segment of dry woodland, which is home to our first endemics, such as **Monteiro's Bushshrike**, **Gabela Helmetshrike** and **White-fronted Wattle-eye**, amongst many others. This will be somewhat similar to our birding around Muxima in a few days' time. We will also search for the strange local race of **Forest Swallow** along the route.



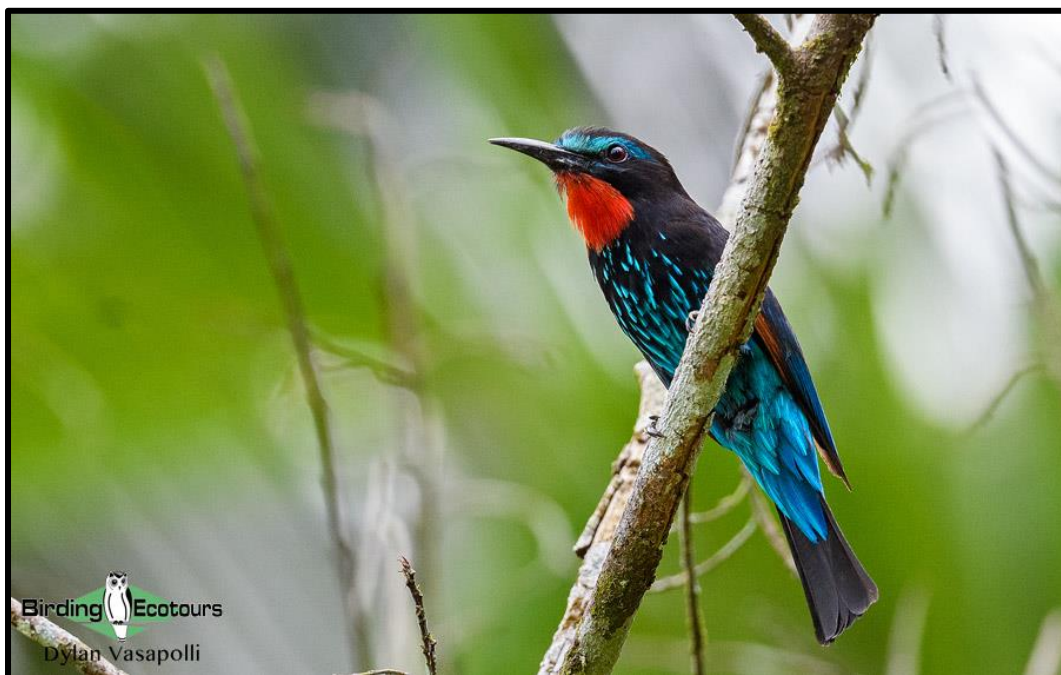
Braun's Bushshrike is a poorly known endemic restricted to the far north of the country.

The main reason for venturing to these northern forests, which hold a wide range of more typical equatorial African species, is that this is the only locality where the rare endemic **Braun's Bushshrike** can be found. We anticipate having our first try for this species in the forest edge fragments it prefers this afternoon, though we do have the entire Day 2 available to search for this species (and the many others that can be found here).

Overnight: Uige

Day 2. Braun's Bushshrike and the northern scarp forests

We have a full day at our disposal, where we will explore the remaining tracts of northern scarp forest. Foremost of our targets here will be the beautiful, but incredibly localized, endemic **Braun's Bushshrike**. This rare and poorly known species is one of Angola's most sought-after birds and will have the bulk of our time and effort being dedicated toward seeing it.



Black Bee-eater is a truly stunning member of this usually-gorgeous family – and one of its most coveted. We stand a good chance of seeing this species in the northern forests.

While exploring these forests the mournful hoots of **Afep Pigeons** are never far away; however, as is customary, it takes some time and patience to track them down. **Blue-throated Rollers** perch in the open above the canopy, and massive **Black-casqued Hornbills** flap noisily between perches, while **Red-fronted Parrots** commute overhead in the mornings and evenings and **Yellow-crested Woodpeckers** drum from the massive trees. The calls of **Grey-headed** and **White-breasted Nigritas** ring out regularly, while large and boisterous **Guinea Turacos** bound in the treetops. Not to be outdone, the massive **Great Blue Turaco** occurs in the area as well and never fails to impress. **Black Bee-eater** flits overhead, and this spectacular bird is fortunately a regular sight in the area. However, the highly prized **Chocolate-backed Kingfisher** is more difficult to locate, but both will be targeted. **Piping** and **African Pied Hornbills** are often heard before being seen, as is true with the many **Barbets** occurring here, such as **Naked-faced**, the strange **Bristle-nosed**, **Hairy-breasted**, and **Yellow-billed**, along with **Speckled** and **Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds**. A number of **Starlings** occur in these forests, and we'll be on the lookout for **Splendid**, **Chestnut-winged**, and **Narrow-tailed**, all regularly attending fruiting trees. **Sunbirds** are also many and diverse, with **Little Green**, **Grey-chinned**, **Collared**, **Green-headed**, **Blue-throated Brown**, **Olive**, **Olive-bellied**, and the beautiful **Superb** all occurring.

Rolling grassy hills (though often burnt at this time of the year) surround these scarp forests and play host to many other interesting species, top of them being the unique **Black-collared Bulbul**. Not to be forgotten are species such as **Brown-backed Scrub Robin**, **Moustached Grass Warbler**, **African Yellow Warbler**, **Black-winged Red Bishop**, **Yellow-mantled Widowbird**, **Red-headed Quelea**, **Orange-cheeked Waxbill**, **Black-and-white Mannikin** and the snazzy **Brown Twinspot**.

Overnight: Uige

Day 3. Transfer to Kalandula

We will have a final morning of birding in a different segment of remaining forest, searching for some of the above-mentioned species we may not yet have seen. After some great birding in the northern scarp forests we depart this area, bound for another fantastic birding zone, the greater Kalandula area. This will likely be quite a long drive, as sections of the road are very slow (though changing every year) - we anticipate arrival in the afternoon.

The town of Kalandula is named for one of Angola's greatest natural wonders, the spectacular Kalandula Falls – we will be sure to include a visit to these falls during our stay here.

Overnight: Kalandula



*The massive **White-headed Robin-Chat** is a sought-after bird occurring in the dense swamp forests around the Kalandula Falls.*

Day 4. Kinjila birding – searching for the mega **White-headed Robin-Chat**

Today will be another exciting day, as we head into the swamp forests near Kalandula for, primarily, the sought-after **White-headed Robin-Chat**. This rare, localized, poorly known, yet spectacular bird is another one of the major avian drawcards on this tour! Initially thought to be extinct, this species was only rediscovered as recently as the 1990s, and it is now known from a handful of scattered locations in otherwise inaccessible areas. While this will be our main target, there are a host of other tantalizing species occurring in these swamp forests and their surroundings as well. The diminutive **White-spotted Flufftail** frequents these swampy areas, while the vocal **Ross's Turaco** bounds through the treetops. Angola's national bird, the endemic **Red-crested Turaco**, occurs as well but is uncommon here and best searched for elsewhere on the trip. The upper reaches also play host to the shy **Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo**, **Scaly-throated Honeyguide**, **Honeyguide Greenbul**, and **Brown-headed Apalis**, while the denser reaches lower down host **Grey-winged Robin-Chat**, **Cabanis's Greenbul**, and **Black-throated Wattle-eye**.

Stands of miombo-type woodland surround the swamp forests, and we will be spending some time slowly working our way through these woodlands as well. This is arguably the best place in the world for the sought-after **Anchieta's Barbet**, while some other key targets in these woodlands will be **Thick-billed Cuckoo**, **Black-backed Barbet**, **Pale-billed Hornbill**, **Black Scimitarbill**, **White-winged Black Tit**, **Miombo Wren-Warbler**, **Yellow-bellied Hyliota**, **Sharp-tailed Starling**, **Miombo Scrub Robin** and **Orange-winged Pytilia** amongst others. Miombo woodland birding isn't always the easiest, as it is often quiet for long periods of time, as the birds frequent 'feeding parties' – large mixed groupings of birds moving through the woodland feeding – and there is usually only activity when you encounter one of these parties.



*The difficult **Anchieta's Barbet** is an uncommon bird throughout its range – though best seen in Angola, and specifically in the miombo woodlands around Kalandula.*

Nearby rivers host colonies of **Red-throated Cliff Swallows**, while the surrounding reeds and damp grasslands can host the likes of **Marsh Tchagra**, **Moustached Grass Warbler** and **Fülleborn's Longclaw**. Even the smallest of bushes near these rivers host the noisy **Yellow-throated Leaflove**. **African Scops Owl** is easily found here at night, and we will try for **Fiery-necked** and, if we're lucky, the spectacular **Pennant-winged Nightjars** as well.

Overnight: Kalandula

Day 5. Transfer to Muxima

A long drive awaits us, as we depart the fabulous Kalandula area, bound for the drier woodlands around Muxima, in a forgotten corner of the Kissama National Park. We may start our first birding around our comfortable lodge late this evening, where we can seek out the near-endemic **Bubbling Cisticola** amongst more widespread species.

Overnight: Muxima



Gabela Helmetshrike is one of several key endemics to be found around Muxima.

Day 6. Endemic birding around Muxima

We have a full day to explore this area and will take a few specific tracks deep into the area, as we target several endemics which occur in these dry woodlands. An early morning start along these quiet roads is our best chance of finding the shy **Grey-striped Francolin** – as they come out to the roadside edge to feed. While nearby thickets and woodlands are home to the difficult **Monteiro's Bushshrike** and **Gabela Helmetshrike**, **White-fronted Wattle-eye** occur more widely and, with enough effort, we should be able to find all these. Some other sought-after birds

occurring here are **Angola Batis**, **Swamp Boubou**, **Pale-olive Greenbul**, **Bubbling Cisticola**, **Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush**, **Golden-backed Bishop** and **Hartet's Camaroptera**, amongst many others. We will also be sure to watch the skies for both **Böhm's** and **Mottled Spinetails**, along with **Mosque Swallow**, all of which breed in the many baobabs strung throughout the area. The mighty Kwanza River can also be accessed at Muxima and, while the water level is usually high at this time of year, we will search hard to find the monotypic **Egyptian Plover** – a Sahel specialty that was only recently found to occur this far south (though is unlikely on the tour).

Overnight: Muxima

Day 7. Transfer to Conda

Another long drive awaits us, as we venture southwards following the escarpment. We will make several birding stops along the route, as usual, and anticipate arriving at our comfortable guesthouse later in the afternoon. Conda is the gateway to access what little remains of the once vast Kumbira Forest. Unfortunately, this forest has been rapidly cleared, and now only small fragments remain – putting the few critical endemics that call these forests home, on the edge.

Overnight: Conda



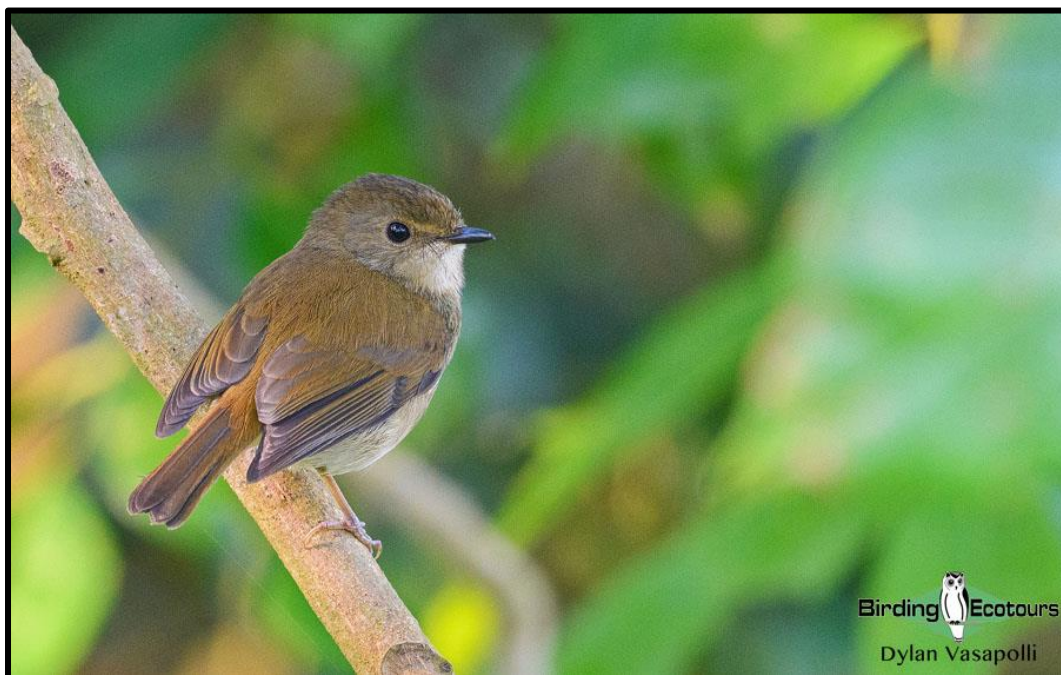
*The jewel-like **Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye** is a forest special to be seen in the Kumbira Forest.*

Days 8 – 9. Endemic birding at Kumbira, and exploring the miombo

We will undertake a day trip to reach all the various small tracts of forest that still remain. The early stages of the bumpy track hosts one of the key targets of the area, the endemic **Pulitzer's Longbill**. This rare and difficult-to-find species is always tricky to pin down as it skulks in

thicker vegetation, making it difficult to see. Before long we enter the first of the degraded ‘forest’ patches, and this is where the bulk of our time will be spent as we explore the roadside vegetation, along with a few trails venturing deeper into the area. Usually first up in the forested areas are some of the more common species such as **Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird**, **Green-backed Woodpecker**, **Angola Batis**, **Pink-footed Puffback**, **Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher**, **Green Crombec**, **Buff-throated Apalis**, and **Black-necked Weaver**.

We should also start encountering the first of the many specials of the area, such as the jaw-droppingly gorgeous **Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye**, snazzy **African Broadbill**, vocal **Yellow-throated Nicator**, and the sought-after **Falkenstein’s Greenbul**. The spectacular **Black-throated Apalis** keeps to the high canopies, while the unusual local subspecies of **Southern Hylota** typically moves about a bit lower down, with **Fraser’s Rufous Thrush** sitting silently in the undergrowth. The deep booms of **Gabon Coucal** ring from the small clearings in the forest, while the soft, melodic calls of **Forest Scrub Robin** are never far away. If we’re lucky, we’ll hopefully find the local race of **Naked-faced Barbet**, known as **Pale-throated Barbet** (and a good candidate for a future split). Of the main specials, however, this is the best site for the country’s national bird, **Red-crested Turaco**, and their loud calls give away their presence as they clamber surprisingly agilely in the canopy. The dainty and endemic **Gabela Akalat** frequents the dense tangles lower down and requires a quick eye to pick up on its rapid movements in these low-light areas. Other specials to be found in the area are **Brown-chested Alethe** and **Brown Illadopsis**, and patience is the name of the game to see these reclusive species.



Gabela Akalat, like all other members of this African family, are shy and elusive and keep to the deep dark thickets – occasionally we get lucky and find a confiding bird, like in this photo.

Arguably the trickiest special here (and the bird that seems to be declining the most) is the rare endemic **Gabela Bushshrike**. Similar to its cousin further north in the country, Braun's Bushshrike, this species has a distinctive 'croaking' call which carries some distance and for which we'll be on high alert. While searching for all these birds we're likely to also come across a range of other more widespread species, and everything from **Tambourine Dove** to **Superb Sunbird** and **Grey Waxbill** is possible.

Depending on how the birding unfolds at Kumbira Forest, we will likely have our second full day here to explore the wider surrounds. This zone supports some of the best miombo woodland patches in this central part of the country – though they are still fragmented. Here we will be after some of the core miombo specials like **African Spotted Creeper**, **Black-necked Eremomela**, **White-breasted Cuckooshrike** and **Anchieta's Sunbird**. Feeding flocks are the order of business in this habitat, and we'll be looking out and listening carefully for leaders of such flocks, like **Rufous-bellied** and **Miombo Tits** and **Green-capped Eremomela** – all of which are usually good indications of feeding flocks. We also hope to find a great many other miombo specialists as we go about our birding, with the likes of **Souza's Shrike**, **Miombo Scrub Robin**, **Miombo Rock Thrush**, **Yellow-bellied Hyliota**, **Wood Pipit** and more on the cards.

More open grassy areas surround the remaining miombo woodland and support some excellent birds. Rare and difficult birds like **Bocage's Sunbird**, **Angola Lark**, **Brazza's Martin** and **Bocage's Weaver** will be high on our lists. Others like **Black-collared Bulbul**, **Black-and-rufous Swallow**, **Fülleborn's Longclaw** and **Marsh Widowbird** can also be seen.

Overnight: Conda



Black-necked Eremomela is a snazzy-looking miombo bird we'll be trying hard to find.

Day 10. Transfer to Mount Moco

We have a long day in store as we transfer to the Mount Moco region. We will be passing through similar areas to where we would likely have birded the day before in the miombo and more open areas, and as such, have second chances for many of these species (see above). Ultimately, much of the day is spent driving, as the roads are slow going, and we anticipate arriving to our comfortable hotel in Bailundo in the late afternoon.

Overnight: Bailundo

Day 11. Mount Moco birding

The forests of the nearby Mount Moco massif have been greatly diminished over the years, but this is the site of some success as the local villages have undertaken a ‘reforesting’ project on the mountain. This has been on the go for some time, and the rewards are starting to come in, with much revegetation and some birds starting to return. It will no doubt still be some time before the true forest specials return, though. Nonetheless, we will be seeking out the likes of **Schalow’s Turaco**, **Western Tinkerbird**, **Bocage’s Akalat** and **Black-chinned Weaver**. The edges still hold small numbers of the prized **Swierstra’s Spurfowl** (unlikely to be seen here though) along with other endemics like **Huambo Cisticola**, **Angola Waxbill** and **Angola Slaty Flycatcher**, and the unique **Black-collared Bulbul** and elusive **Dusky Twinspot**.

Fragmented sections of miombo and floodplain habitats remain on the lower slopes of the massif, and we can search these in the afternoon for any of the species we may still be missing.

Overnight: Bailundo



*The unique local race of **Western Tinkerbird** has cause for separation and is a target on the tour – like many other species with unique local races found in Angola.*

Day 12. Transfer to Lubango

A long travel day awaits, as we depart the bird-rich central parts of Angola, bound for the large southern city of Lubango. As usual, our drive will be broken up with several birding stops, where we can try for some miombo birds, alongside more widespread species – but we anticipate arriving at our comfortable lodge late in the afternoon.

Overnight: Casper Lodge, Lubango



The Tundavala Escarpment offers superb birding in a scenic setting.

Day 13. Birding Tundavala

Our day will be dedicated to birding the Tundavala escarpment, on the edge of the city. Another of Angola's more famous natural sites, the Tundavala Gap affords spectacular views over the escarpment as it rapidly drops from the high plateau down to the coastal plain, more than 3,300 feet (1,000 m) below.

While taking in the spectacular views, we have a chance for several aerial species, of which **Bradfield's Swift** should form the bulk of the numbers. **Alpine Swift**, **Rock Martin**, and **Black Saw-wing** should also feature, and we will keep an eye out for raptors, including **Augur Buzzard**, **Rock Kestrel**, and **Booted Eagle**. The open rocky areas themselves are home to **Short-toed Rock Thrush** and **Striped Pipit** along with two of the main specials here, **Rockrunner** and **Angola Cave Chat**. The latter two species typically require some work to track down as they slink through gaps in the rocks, and we will be sure to put in some time to track them down. The rare **Swierstra's Spurfowl** occurs in these areas as well and will be another key target.

Where the forest-type habitat begins we'll be on the lookout for **Grey Apalis**, **Angola Slaty Flycatcher**, **Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird**, and **Angola Waxbill**, while species such as **Western Tinkerbird** and even **Bocage's Akalat** are possible as well. The scrubby plains on the lower slopes are good for smaller seedeaters and the endemic **Red-backed Mousebird**. The recently discovered (and very isolated) population of **White-headed Barbet** occurs rarely in a remote valley, and should we have time, we will undertake the journey out to try for these special birds.

Overnight: Casper Lodge, Lubango



Angola Cave Chat is a striking species we should see at the incredible Tundavala Escarpment.

Day 14. Namibe birding – and most of Namibia's near-endemics

We have the morning available to try for any outstanding targets we may still be searching for in the Tundavala mountains. Following which, we will transfer down the escarpment to the dry coastal plain via the incredible Leba Pass. Our main birding, however, will only start once we have descended to the plains below, from where we will initially explore some of the dry, deciduous woodland, riverbeds, and acacia thornveld – host to a completely new set of birds. The nomadic **Cinderella Waxbill** is a main target, but it is highly unpredictable in the area at this time of year, and notoriously difficult to find. We will also be on the lookout for other specials like **Rüppell's Parrot**, **Monteiro's Hornbill**, **White-tailed Shrike**, **Carp's Tit** and **Meves's Starling**.

Transferring further west toward the coast the habitat rapidly changes and becomes increasingly drier. Stands of acacia thornveld in these dry zones host many species more characteristic of further south (like Namibia), such as **Common Scimitarbill**, **Pririt Batis**, **Crimson-breasted Shrike**, **Ashy Tit**, **Barred Wren-Warbler**, **Chestnut-vented Warbler**, **Yellow-bellied**

Eremomela, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Dusky Sunbird, Scaly-feathered Weaver, Red-headed Finch, and White-throated and Yellow Canaries.

Continuing further we enter the barren Namib Desert, and the dry gravel plains here host another suite of exciting species. The sought-after **Rüppell's Korhaan** strides through the open plains, and we will search carefully for **Benguela Long-billed Lark**. Not to be outdone is the ghostly white **Tractrac Chat**, its close cousin, **Karoo Chat**, and the puzzling **Chat Flycatcher**. **Lark-like Bunting** can be present in large numbers, while we'll need to keep an eye out for **Pale-winged Starling** as they roam the plains. **Pale Chanting Goshawk** is often easily seen perched atop roadside poles, as is the western race of **Southern Fiscal**.

Overnight: Namibe/ Moçâmedes area

Day 15. Birding to Benguela

Following an exciting few days birding in the south of Angola, we gradually start our journey back northwards to the capital city, Luanda. Today, we transfer as far as the Benguela region, on the coast. The rocky hills near the coast offer us excellent chances of finding the reclusive **Hartlaub's Spurfowl**. Their loud, duetting call rings out from all parts of the hills and persistent scanning of exposed rocks is the order of the day. The surrounding areas play host to some of the same more typical Namibian specials, like **Rüppell's Parrot**, **Rosy-faced Lovebird**, **Carp's Tit**, and **Bare-cheeked Babbler**, **Rockrunner** and **White-tailed Shrike** – presenting us with a convenient backup should we have missed any of these. Closer to the coast, dry plains reminiscent of the Namib Desert occasionally host the likes of **Double-banded Courser** and **Stark's Lark**, while the scrubby vegetation can be birded for the likes of **Cape Penduline Tit**.

Overnight: Benguela



*The strange **White-tailed Shrike** is always a group favorite.*

Day 16. Birding to the Kwanza River

The penultimate day of the tour sees us spending the morning birding coastal wetlands and salt pans around Benguela and Lobito, before making our way up to the Kwanza River mouth – lying just south of Luanda, and our end point of the tour. A good array of wetland species will likely include **Cape Teal**, **Greater and Lesser Flamingos**, **African Spoonbill**, **Great White Pelican**, **Reed and White-breasted Cormorant**, and more tropical species like **African Pygmy Goose** and **African Openbill**, along with many others.

We will arrive at the lovely Kwanza River, south of Luanda, in the late afternoon, where we will relax and settle in, following what is sure to be an exciting tour.

Overnight: Mangais Resort, Kwanza River

Day 17. Final morning birding, and departure from Luanda

This is the departure day, and we will have a final morning of birding available to us. The mangroves around the Kwanza River mouth hold the tricky **Mangrove Sunbird**, amongst others, while the Kwanza River mouth holds a good selection of waterbirds – what is sure to be a fitting way to end the tour.

Note that the lodge we make use of is well outside Luanda city, and we advise participants to book their departure flights back home (or to our linking São Tomé and Príncipe birding tour), only in the afternoon from 4pm onwards.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides, and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Tour Details

Duration:	17 days
Group size:	5–6
Dates:	23 June–09 July 2027
Start:	Luanda, Angola
End:	Luanda, Angola
Prices:	US\$ 8,950 per person sharing (2027)

Single supplements: US\$ 875 (2027)

Price includes:

All accommodation (no camping), from Day 0 to Day 16
Meals (from dinner on Day 0 until lunch on Day 17)
Unlimited bottled water
Expert tour leader
All entrance fees
All ground transport, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Price excludes:

International flights (to and from Luanda)
Visas
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls,
etc. Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding excursions
Soft/alcoholic drinks
Personal travel insurance
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))