



**SOUTHERN MOZAMBIQUE BIRDING TOUR –
CRAB-PLOVER, GREEN TINKERBIRD & OLIVE-HEADED
WEAVER!**

Date 5 – 14 December 2024



*The highly prized **Crab-plover** is a major target on this tour!*

This exciting tour has been specifically designed, as both an extension and a stand-alone tour, to follow on from our main Highland Zimbabwe to Coastal Mozambique Tour. Complimenting one another well, this tour takes place rather throughout the southern half of Mozambique, and targets incredibly localized and rare species such as **Olive-headed Weaver** and **Green Tinkerbird** (although both of these targets will require some degree of luck, as they have become difficult in recent years) and one of the most sought-after birds in the world, the monotypic **Crab-plover**. Additionally, this is an excellent birding tour all round, with a wide array of habitats explored and a large number of birds possible. Further exciting birds such as **Saunders's Tern**, **Racket-tailed Roller**, **Neergaard's Sunbird**, **Rudd's Apalis**, **Gorgeous Bushshrike** and **Lemon-breasted Canary** are all likely!



Rudd's Apalis is one of the many localized species we'll be searching for.

Following on from our main tour, mentioned above, this tour begins in the port city of Beira, from where we gradually make our way southwards towards the idyllic sub-tropical islands off the coast of Vilankulos – the San Sebastien Peninsula. Here we make use of boats to explore the vast network of coastal channels and mudflats searching for a number of exciting birds. We eventually pull ourselves away from this paradise, venturing ever further south in the country, exploring coastal thickets, miombo woodlands and grassy wetlands, until we arrive on the outskirts of Maputo – the capital city of Mozambique, where this tour comes to a close.

Itinerary (10 days/9 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Beira, and the end of the Highland Zimbabwe to Coastal Mozambique tour

The first day of this tour coincides with the last day of our main Highland Zimbabwe to Coastal Mozambique tour. For those of you joining both tours, our full day will likely be spent birding the vast Rio Savane floodplains. This is a very birdy area, and can host some truly exciting birds. Note that at this time of the year, the floodplains will likely be fairly dry, but small bodies of water are scattered throughout. Some of the prized, yet somewhat nomadic birds we'll be searching for are **Blue Quail**, **Black-rumped Buttonquail**, **Locust Finch** and **Great Snipe**. Resident species we'll be on the lookout for include the elegant **Wattled Crane**, **Rufous-bellied Heron**, **Lesser Jacana**, **African Pygmy Goose**, **Southern Banded Snake-Eagle**, **Black-bellied Bustard** and **Red-headed Quelea**.

For those of you who plan on joining only this tour, and not our Highland Zimbabwe to Coastal Mozambique tour that precedes this, today is your arrival day, and you can arrive in Beira at your leisure – though we usually advise arriving by midday, to allow the afternoon to settle in, and perhaps do some exploratory birding.

Overnight: Beira



*The scarce **Wattled Crane** can be seen in the floodplains around Beira.*

Day 2. Beira to The Buffalo Camp

We will spend our morning birding around Beira, looking for some of the above-mentioned specials (Day 1). We will then begin the long transfer to the Machanga area, where we will spend the night. This is a long journey, and we anticipate reaching our destination in the late afternoon and, depending on our arrival time, we may be able to do some birding in the nearby mixed

woodlands. A wide array of species are possible here, and might include the likes of **Trumpeter Hornbill**, **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater**, **Pale Batis** and the large **Brown-necked Parrot**.

Overnight: The Buffalo Camp, Machanga

Days 3 – 4. Transfer to Vilankulos, and birding the San Sebastien Peninsula

We will spend the first part of the morning of Day 3 birding in the productive mixed woodlands around the lodge. In addition to the species mentioned under Day 2 above, we will also be looking for the likes of **Collared Palm Thrush**, **Eastern Nicator**, **Stierling's Wren Warbler** and **Green-backed Woodpecker**, amongst others. We will then proceed further down the coast to the coastal town of Vilankulos, where we will embark on an exciting boat ride to a lodge on the nearby San Sebastien Peninsula. We will base ourselves here for two nights as we explore this rich coastal area.



*Vast numbers of **Lesser Sand Plover** (and other shorebirds) can be seen in the area.*

The San Sebastien Peninsula gives one access to the southern end of the Bazaruto Archipelago, more specifically ‘The Sanctuary’, which has proven to be one of the ultimate shorebird hotspots in southern Africa! Of our primary target species, large numbers of the monotypic and highly sought-after **Crab-plover** reliably occur, as do small numbers of the scarce and poorly known **Saunders's Tern**. In recent years, **Damara Terns** have also been found to be regular, adding yet another sought-after species to the list of possibilities. In local terms, this is also a hotspot for rarities, with species such as **Eurasian Oystercatcher** and **Gull-billed Tern** regularly seen. Aside from these mouth-watering birds, we will also see many other species, including large numbers of **Greater and Lesser Sand Plovers**, **Eurasian Whimbrel**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Ruddy Turnstone**,

Sanderling and **Terek Sandpiper**, along with **Lesser Crested Tern**. Additionally, while we are navigating the mix of waterways, sandspits and mudflats, we also stand a chance of seeing **Dugong** – a type of manatee (marine-going mammal).

Overnight: Curlew Lodge, The Sanctuary

Days 5 – 6. Transfer to Morrungulo and birding Unguane

We will have the full morning available on Day 5 for us to further explore and bird the incredible San Sebastien Peninsula, searching for any of the above-mentioned species that may still be eluding us. We will then transfer back to the mainland at Vilankulos, by boat, from where we will continue our journey southwards through the country.

The woodlands and coastal thickets around Unguane are legendary as they are the only site of the recently rediscovered (only in 2013) local population of **Green Tinkerbird**. This is a poorly known and patchily distributed species along Africa's east coast, that is nowhere common, and will be the main quarry for our birding in the area. Unfortunately, this species has become difficult to find in recent years, and we'll need some luck to come across it. An entirely different array of species can be found here, as the dense thickets support a different suite of birdlife. Species we're likely to come across while searching for the tinkerbird include **Gorgeous Bushshrike**, **Livingstone's Flycatcher**, **Rudd's Apalis**, **Red-throated Twinspot** and **Plain-backed Sunbird**. Overhead, we're sure to come across **Mottled** and **Böhm's Spinetails** while the coastal forest around the Morrungulo resort usually provides **Black-throated Wattle-eye**.

Overnight: Morrungulo Resort



Green Tinkerbird was only rediscovered in southern Africa in 2013!

Days 7 – 8. Birding the Panda woodlands

We will have a final chance on the morning of Day 7 to visit the woodlands around Unguane should we still be searching for **Green Tinkerbird**, or any of the other possibilities (mentioned above under Days 5 – 6). Following our morning birding the area, we will begin the transfer further south down the coast to the Maxixe/Inharrime area. Here we will be based for two nights as we explore the rich miombo woodlands around the small village of Panda.

These woodlands, like the Unguane woodlands mentioned above, are also quite simply legendary, as they are the only site within the southern African subregion where the rare and difficult-to-find **Olive-headed Weaver** occurs. This will be our primary target, but these woodlands are brimming with birds, and we will also search for other sought-after species as **Racket-tailed Roller**, **Green-backed Honeybird**, **Neergaard's Sunbird**, **Thick-billed Cuckoo**, **Pale Batis**, **White-breasted Cuckooshrike**, **Lemon-breasted Canary** and more. We will explore seasonally flooded wetlands (depending on water levels) in the area which host exciting species such as **Eurasian Bittern**, **Rufous-bellied Heron**, **Lesser Jacana**, **African Pygmy Goose** and more.

Overnight: Maxixe/Inharrime



*Within southern Africa, **Olive-headed Weaver** only occurs around Panda.*

Day 9. Birding from Panda woodlands to Macaneta

We will have a final chance in the morning to bird and explore the Panda area, searching for any of the exciting species we may not yet have found (mentioned under Days 7 – 8 above). Armed with a long transfer, we can't dally too long as we head further south down the coast to our comfortable lodge, just north of the city, on the vast tidal wetland and coastal grasslands of the Macaneta Peninsula. Located a stone's throw away from Maputo, this will be our final destination of the trip.

Depending on our arrival time this afternoon, we may be able to get a head start trying to find some of the specials of the area. A wide array of birds, especially waterbirds, can be found here, and we're likely to accumulate a high list. In particular, we'll be looking out for species such as **Collared Pratincole**, **Pink-backed Pelican**, **Pale-crowned Cisticola**, **Southern Brown-throated Weaver** and **Rosy-throated Longclaw**. Additionally, several locally rare shorebirds have turned up over the years, like **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**, and we'll be sure to keep an eye out for these birds as well.

Day 10. Departure from Maputo

The first half of the day is available for birding the Macaneta region, and searching for its many specials. At midday, the tour will conclude as we head to the Maputo International Airport for your departures back home – we advise you to book flights from mid-afternoon onwards.

Overnight: No overnight included

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 international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration:	10 days
Group Size:	4 - 8
Dates:	5 – 14 December 2024
Start:	Beira, Mozambique
End:	Maputo, Mozambique
Prices:	US\$6,585 per person sharing – based on 6 - 9 participants

Single Supplements: US\$766

Price includes:

- All accommodation
- Meals (from lunch on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 10)
- Unlimited bottled water
- Expert tour leader
- All entrance fees
- All ground transport, including airport pick-up and drop-off as indicated (early/late arrivals are not included)
- All boat excursions (Vilankulos)

Price excludes:

International flights (to Beira and from Maputo)

Visas (Mozambique)

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](#))

Covid-related costs