



**TANZANIA BIRDING TOUR: REMOTE ENDEMIC OF THE
EASTERN ARC MOUNTAINS**

01 - 23 SEPTEMBER 2027



*The exceptionally localized **Kilombero Weaver** is one of over 30 endemic birds that we target on this tour.*

Tanzania is among Africa's premier birdwatching destinations, and for good reason. The country boasts an impressive list of over 1,150 bird species and is among the most endemic-rich destinations in Africa. Powerful geological forces have shaped the topography of East Africa, creating vast rift valleys and fragmented mountain ranges, often referred to as "sky islands." Among the most remarkable of these are the Eastern Arc Mountains, an ancient and discontinuous chain that stretches from southern Kenya through eastern Tanzania. Over evolutionary timescales, the isolation of these mountains has given rise to unique life forms and contributed to Tanzania's exceptional levels of endemism. Just shy of 40 bird species are found nowhere but Tanzania, many of which are exceptionally localized, occurring only on a single mountain range. Many of these endemic birds are found in the afro-tropical montane forests, which, as the name suggests, are closely associated with the region's mountain ranges. However, Tanzania offers birders the opportunity to explore a variety of other habitats, each with its own unique avian assemblages, including miombo woodland, dry thorn savanna, mixed savanna, and, of course, the vast expanses of afro-tropical grasslands, which set the scene for the "Great Migration" in which millions of wildebeest and other ungulates participate.

This endemics-focused Tanzania birding tour targets over 30 of the country's endemic birds and starts in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's bustling port city and the largest city in East Africa. From here, we fly to the idyllic Pemba Island, where lush green coastal forests meet white sand beaches. On Pemba, we search for the island's four endemic species: **Pemba Green Pigeon**, **Pemba Scops Owl**, **Pemba White-eye**, and **Pemba Sunbird**, before flying back to the mainland, where the scarce **Ruvu Weaver** is an early target for us. We then spend the next 20 days exploring several mountain ranges in Tanzania's Eastern Arc Mountains. First on the agenda is the Ukaguru and Uluguru Mountains, where a treasure-trove of poorly known endemics awaits, including **Rubeho Akalat**, **Uluguru Bushshrike**, **Winifred's Warbler**, **Uluguru** and **Yellow-throated Mountain Greenbuls**, and **Moreau's** and **Loveridge's Sunbirds**. We then explore the miombo woodlands and savannas of Mikumi National Park, where we hope to see **Racket-tailed Roller**, **Pale-billed Hornbill**, and iconic African megafauna like **African Savanna Elephant**, **Cape Buffalo**, **Lion**, and **Leopard**.

After Mikumi, we try for **Kilombero Weaver** and the endemic cisticola duo of **White-tailed** and **Kilombero Cisticolas**. Next up are the extensive Udzungwa Mountains, where we hope to connect with the near-mythical **Udzungwa Forest Partridge**, **Iringa Akalat**, **Rufous-winged Sunbird**, and **Kipengere Seedeater**, amongst others. A brief visit to the arid Baobab Valley could yield another trio of endemics, including **Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill**, **Yellow-collared Lovebird**, and **Ashy Starling**, before making our way north to the Usambara Mountains. Here, we will look for several endemics, including **Usambara Hyliota**, **Usambara Thrush**, **Usambara Akalat**, **Usambara Weaver**, **Montane Tiny Greenbul**, **Tanzanian Illadopsis**, and **Banded Green Sunbird**. Next, we visit the South Pare Mountains for the endemic **South Pare White-eye**, the outskirts of Arusha for **Broad-ringed White-eye**, and the famous "Lark Plains" north of Arusha for **Beesley's Lark** and a stack of other species typical of East Africa's arid scrublands. Time-dependent, we may try for **Fischer's Lovebird** and **Rufous-tailed Weaver**, both of which are endemic to Tanzania, but best seen on our Northern Tanzania - Introduction to Africa birding tour. The tour will conclude in Arusha. We expect to amass a sizeable list on this trip, and despite the endemics being the focus, there are so many other excellent birds that we will be sure to try for. Although we cannot possibly mention them all, a few of these species include **Hartlaub's** and **Fischer's Turacos**, **Bar-tailed Trogon**, **Böhm's Bee-eater**, **Spot-throat**, **Dapple-throat**, **Green-headed Oriole**, **Red-capped** and **Long-billed Forest Warblers**, **Kretschmer's Longbill**, **Amani**

and **Usambara Double-collared Sunbirds**, and **Lesser Seedcracker**. Unlike many of our other tours, this itinerary takes us into some truly remote corners of Tanzania's Eastern Arc Mountains, where accommodation is more basic than usual. Where possible, we make use of the best available lodges along our route, but in some areas, camping is the only practical way to access the forests where some of the region's most sought-after birds occur. Reaching the elusive **Udzungwa Forest Partridge**, for example, requires a steep hike up to Luaala Camp in the Udzungwa Mountains, where we will spend two nights camping. We will also camp for two nights in the Udzungwa Scarp Forest while searching for its elusive denizens. During our time in the Uluguru Mountains, birding will involve longer hikes, sometimes on muddy trails that can be moderate-to-challenging but very rewarding. If you are unsure whether this tour will suit your level of fitness, please feel free to contact us, and we will be happy to advise you.

These efforts are all part of what makes this tour such a special adventure. For those with a spirit of exploration and a passion for rare birds, the rewards of birding these remarkable forests more than make up for the extra effort.



*We will have a good chance at seeing the gorgeous **Bar-tailed Trogon** on this tour.*

Itinerary (23 days/22 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Dar es Salaam

Our Tanzanian birding adventure will begin in the vibrant, bustling city of Dar es Salaam (affectionately known as “Dar”). Dar is Tanzania's largest city and serves as the country's economic hub, featuring its busiest port, and is home to over 6 million residents! After your arrival

at Julius Nyerere International Airport, you will be met by our driver, a local guide, and a Birding Ecotours guide and transferred to the comfortable Mediterraneo Hotel on the Swahili Coast.

While enjoying our view over the white sand beaches and turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean, we will likely get our lists kicked off with a few common species like **African Palm Swift**, **Dark-capped Bulbul**, **Brown-breasted Barbet**, **Little Bee-eater**, **Northern Red-fronted Tinkerbird**, **White-browed Robin-Chat**, **Blue-capped Cordon-bleu**, **Scarlet-chested Sunbird**, and even a **Gull-billed Tern** flying out at sea. Over dinner in the evening, we will discuss our plans for the next three weeks. Ahead of us will lie the prospect of connecting with some of Africa's rarest and most sought-after birds as we traverse the remote reaches of this incredibly diverse country.

Overnight: Mediterraneo Hotel

Day 2. Transfer to Pemba Island

After breakfast at the hotel, we will head back to the airport and catch the short internal flight up the coast and over the ocean to Pemba Island. Pemba is one of the two large islands in the Zanzibar Archipelago (the other, of course, being Zanzibar); however, Pemba is considerably more rural and less touristy than Zanzibar. After landing in Pemba, we will make our way across the island, taking in its rolling green hills, villages, palm trees, and dense clove plantations (Pemba is one of the world's primary clove producers). Our lodge is on the island's north-western coast.

Pemba is home to no fewer than four endemic bird species, and we will waste no time in tracking them down. We will be staying close to the island's best birding site – Ngezi Forest Reserve and we plan to spend our first afternoon birding here. This 3,600-acre tract of pristine coastal forest is home to a stack of exciting birds, including all four endemics: **Pemba Sunbird**, **Pemba White-eye**, **Pemba Green Pigeon**, and **Pemba Scops Owl**, although we will likely have to wait for nightfall to try for the latter. Other species we may encounter here include **Palm-nut Vulture**, **Dickinson's Kestrel**, **Crowned Hornbill**, **Brown-headed Parrot**, **Mangrove and African Pygmy Kingfishers**, **Broad-billed Roller**, **Olive Bee-eater**, **Black-bellied Starling**, **Olive Sunbird**, and **Black-winged Red Bishop**. We should also see the large, endemic **Pemba Flying Fox**, which can be found in roosts of over 800 bats and, at night, we may see **Garnett's Greater Galago**.

In the evening, we will make our first attempt at seeing **Pemba Scops Owl**, before returning to our lodge for dinner.

Overnight: Pemba Paradise Beach Resort

Day 3. Full day birding on Pemba Island

We have the opportunity today to try again for any species missed yesterday, of course prioritizing the endemics. Coastal birding on Pemba can be rewarding, and we will be sure to try for the monotypic **Crab-plover**, which can be seen in sizeable flocks on the white-sand beaches. Among the local fishermen pushing wooden dhows into the ocean, we are likely to see more widespread shorebirds and larids, including **Eurasian Whimbrel**, **Common Curlew**, and **Terek Sandpipers**, **Common Ringed** and **Grey Plovers**, **Common Greenshank**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Lesser Crested**, **Greater Crested**, and **Common Terns**, and if we are lucky, **Sooty Gull**.



*The monotypic **Crab-plover** can be seen on Pemba's picturesque beaches.*

Overnight: [Pemba Paradise Beach Resort](#)

Day 4. Transfer to Dar es Salaam

Depending on flight times, we may have a final birding session on Pemba this morning or head straight to the airport to catch our flights to Dar. In the afternoon, we will try to squeeze in an afternoon birding session at one of the wetland sites around Dar, which could produce a variety of widespread waterbirds like the monotypic **Hamerkop**, **Yellow-billed Stork**, several egrets and herons, **White-faced Whistling Duck**, and **Spur-winged Lapwing**, in addition to **Coastal Cisticola**, **Zanzibar Red Bishop**, and **Golden-backed** and **Eastern Golden Weavers**.

In the evening, we enjoy our final views of the Indian Ocean before heading into the remote interior for the rest of the tour, where the real adventure begins.

Overnight: [Mediterraneo Hotel](#)

Day 5. Transfer to the Ukaguru Mountains

Today is mostly a travel day with limited birding as we make our way east to the Ukaguru Mountains. The drive is likely to take most of the day; however, we will make our first attempt at seeing the highly localized and endemic **Ruvu Weaver** along the way. After hours of passing through typical rural African landscapes we will arrive at our accommodation near the Ukaguru Mountains in the small town of Gairo.



*Tanzania is one of the best places to see **Olive-flanked Ground Robin**.*

If time allows, we will head out for an afternoon birding session along the main dirt road, giving us access to a large tract of afro-tropical montane forest. Some of the more common species here include the endemic trio of **Yellow-throated Mountain Greenbul**, **Moreau's Sunbird**, and **Winifred's Warbler** (here of the *rubehoensis* subspecies, treated by some authorities as a separate species – Rubeho Warbler), the rather drab **Evergreen Forest Warbler**, near-endemic **Red-capped Forest Warbler**, **Chapin's** and **Bar-throated Apalises**, **Fülleborn's Boubou**, **Black-fronted Bushshrike**, **Dark Batis**, **Shelley's Greenbul**, **White-tailed Crested Flycatcher**, **White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher**, **White-starred Robin**, and **Moustached Tinkerbird**. Another major target for us will be the endemic **Rubeho Akalat**, which, despite being relatively easy to hear, can be a real challenge to see. Other skulkers on offer include **Olive-flanked Ground Robin** and **African Hill Babbler**.

A good dose of patience and luck, in equal measure, will be required to lay eyes on a **Spot-throat**, a near-endemic in its own genus (*Modulatrix*) and one of only three species belonging to the oddball Modulatricidae family. Other, less common species that we will keep our eyes and ears open for include **Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon**, **Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo**, **Kenrick's Starling**, **Red-faced Crimsonwing**, and **Oriole Finch**. We will likely hear the deep hooting vocalizations of **Blue Monkeys** while birding here and may catch a glimpse of them moving around in the canopy. After a long day, we will doubtless look forward to an early night in preparation for another exciting day of Eastern Arc birding tomorrow.



*The elusive **Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo** may take some work to see well.*

Overnight: Gairo

Day 6. Ukaguru Mountains to Morogoro

We will start the morning by birding along the same stretch of road in the Ukaguru Mountains as yesterday, allowing us to revisit any missed targets and improve our views of any species not seen adequately yesterday. We plan to spend most of the day exploring the lush afro-tropical montane forests here, and in the afternoon, we will drive to the town of Morogoro.

The Uluguru Mountains rise dramatically to the south of the town; however, today we will focus on the dry woodlands around town. This will give us another opportunity to see the endemic **Ruvu Weaver** along with other species typical of this habitat, including **Spotted Palm Thrush**, **Emerald-spotted Wood Dove**, **Variable Sunbird**, **Yellow Bishop**, **Striped Kingfisher**, **Klass's Cuckoo**, **Orange-breasted Bushshrike**, **Speckled and Blue-naped Mousebirds**, and **Spot-flanked Barbet**, among many other species.

Overnight: Morogoro



The attractive *White-winged Apalis* occurs at a few sites on this tour.

Days 7 – 8. Birding the Uluguru Mountains

Due to their similar nature, these days are discussed as one in this itinerary. We will have two full days to explore the exceptionally biodiverse Uluguru Mountains, which rise abruptly from the low-lying plains around Morogoro to a height of over 8,600 feet (2,600 m) at their highest point. Birding in this area requires moderate-to-challenging hiking for between six and eight hours each day, on muddy trails through dense forest, as well as long drives along poor roads. However, the quality of the birds makes all the discomfort worth it. We visit two subtly distinct forests in the Uluguru Mountains: Tegetero Forest in the northeast and the higher-elevation Bunduki Forest in the southwest. After each long day out in the field, we will return to our accommodation in Morogoro in the evening.

Our primary targets here include the three Uluguru endemics: **Uluguru Bushshrike**, **Uluguru Mountain Greenbul**, and **Loveridge's Sunbird**. We will listen out for the whistling call of **Uluguru Bushshrike** while birding in the reaches of Tegetero Forest, while **Uluguru Mountain Greenbul** is best seen at Bunduki Forest. **Loveridge's Sunbird**, by contrast, can be delightfully common everywhere. The forests here abound with birds, and there are so many other sought-after species. The large **Silvery-cheeked Hornbill** is common here, and we have a good chance at seeing **Livingstone's Turaco**, **Bar-tailed Trogon**, **Green-headed Oriole**, **Green Barbet**, **African Broadbill**, **Waller's and Kenrick's Starlings**, **Olive-headed Greenbul**, **Winifred's Warbler** (here of the *winifredae* subspecies), **Trilling Cisticola**, **Moustached Grass Warbler**, **Dark-backed Weaver**, **Yellow-bellied Waxbill**, and **Southern Citril**.



*The shy **Sharpe's Akalat** occurs along much of our route.*

Apalises are well represented with **Chapin's**, **Black-headed**, and the stunning **White-winged Apalis** all occurring here. Again, the undergrowth has its own assortment of elusive birds, this time featuring **Sharpe's Akalat**, **Orange Ground Thrush**, and the scarce **White-chested Alethe**. In the primate department, we will look out for the smart-looking **Angolan Colobus**, which inhabits most forests in the Eastern Arc Mountains. As expected, there is a fair degree of species overlap between the isolated mountain ranges of the Eastern Arc, so we will have ample chance to connect with some of the more widespread species listed under the entries for the previous few days.

Overnight: Morogoro

Day 9. Uluguru Mountains to Udzungwa Mountains (East) via Mikumi National Park

Today, we will bid farewell to the Uluguru Mountains and make our way southwest to the Udzungwa Mountains. Between these mountain ranges lie vast expanses of savanna and miombo woodlands, and we visit the underrated Mikumi National Park for a few hours to explore these habitats. We are sure to add several new species to the trip list here, featuring species typical of the African savanna like **Black-bellied Bustard**, **Red-necked Spurfowl**, **Marabou** and **Saddle-billed Storks**, **Martial Eagle**, **Brown** and **Black-chested Snake Eagles**, **Bateleur**, **Southern Ground Hornbill**, **African Grey Hornbill**, **Lilac-breasted Roller**, **Superb** and **Greater Blue-eared Starlings**, and **Yellow-billed** and **Red-billed Oxpeckers**. Vultures are well-represented here, with **White-backed**, **White-headed**, **Lappet-faced**, **Hooded**, **Palm-nut**, and **Rüppell's Vultures** all being possibilities.

Mikumi also supports many mammals, including plains game like **Impala**, **Bohor Reedbuck**, **Common Eland**, **Southern Bushbuck**, **Blue Wildebeest**, **Plains Zebra**, and **Common Warthog**.

Additionally, **Maasai Giraffe** is relatively common, as are **Cape Buffalo** and **African Savanna Elephant**, while luck will be required to connect with the park's predators, such as **Leopard**, **Lion**, and **Spotted Hyena**. If we haven't already bumped into them on this trip, we should add both **Yellow Baboon** and **Vervet Monkey** here.

After what is sure to be a productive session at Mikumi, we continue along the wonderful new road to our accommodation at the Udzungwa Twiga Hotel, conveniently located near the entrance to Udzungwa Mountains National Park.

Overnight: Udzungwa Twiga Hotel



*The Critically Endangered (BirdLife International) **White-headed Vulture** can be seen at Mikumi National Park.*

Day 10. Udzungwa Mountains National Park and Kilombero Valley Floodplain

We start the day with a stroll around the hotel grounds, which are frequented by **Trumpeter** and **Crowned Hornbills**, **Blue-spotted Wood Dove**, **Tropical** and **East Coast Boubous**, and even **Palm-nut Vulture**. After breakfast at the hotel, we will make our way to Udzungwa Mountains National Park, where we will bird around the park headquarters and take a slow hike through the lower foothill forests. Here, we could see **Eastern Crested Guineafowl**, **Green Malkoha**, **White-eared Barbet**, **Green-backed Woodpecker**, **Eastern Nicator**, **Black-and-white (Vanga) Flycatcher**, the near-endemic **Kretschmer's Longbill**, **Black-headed Apalis**, **Livingstone's Flycatcher**, **Red-capped Robin-Chat**, **Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird**, and **Magpie Mannikin**.



African Broadbill is fairly widespread in Tanzania's Eastern Arc Mountains.

Keeping an eye skywards could produce a soaring **Crowned Eagle** or the much smaller **African Goshawk**, both of which are regularly seen here. Perhaps the most sought-after bird is the rare **Lesser Seedcracker**, which can sometimes be seen in the village where the forest has been cut back, allowing for the establishment of seeding grasses on which it feeds. With some luck, we may see the endemic **Udzungwa Red Colobus** while wandering through the forests. While birding here we will be treated to stunning views over the forest-clad hillsides, often shrouded in mist, before heading back to our accommodation for lunch.

After lunch, we will drive to the remote Kilombero Valley Floodplain - an intriguing place. The fact that it's a mission to get to could explain why it has two very distinctive yet only recently described endemic cisticolas: **Kilombero** and **White-tailed Cisticolas**, and the recently described, endemic **Kilombero Weaver**. All three of these birds are easy to find here, along with a range of other excellent water-associated species such as coucals (the massive **Coppery-tailed Coucal** being a highlight), herons, lapwings (such as the attractive **White-crowned Lapwing**), kingfishers, the localized **Marsh Tchagra**, and the beautifully colored **Orange-breasted Waxbill**. The floodplain is heavily used by people for fishing and cattle-grazing, so it's quite a scene to behold. We hope to see our targets with ease, and then we will start the drive back to Mikumi, where we will spend the night at a comfortable lodge.

Overnight: [Mikumi Tan-Swiss Lodge](#)



The attractive *White-crowned Lapwing* can be seen at the Kilombero Floodplain.

Day 11. Mikumi, Baobab Valley, and Iringa

The plan for the morning is to bird along the Kilosa Road, which runs through a tract of miombo woodland north of Mikumi. As this will be our first exposure to miombo birding on the trip, we expect to add several new birds, with possible additions including **Pale-billed Hornbill**, **Speckle-throated Woodpecker**, **Racket-tailed Roller**, **Rufous-bellied Tit**, **Pale Batis**, **Arnot's Chat**, **Pale Flycatcher**, **Stierling's Wren-Warbler**, **Yellow-bellied Hylia**, **White-breasted Cuckooshrike**, **Red-faced Crombec**, **Lesser Blue-eared Starling**, **Shelley's Sunbird** (here of the endemic *hofmanni* subspecies, treated by some authorities as a separate species – Hofmann's Sunbird), **Cabanis's Bunting**, and **Black-eared Seedeater**.

Miombo birding is heavily dependent on finding mixed-species flocks, and we may find ourselves going for lengthy periods without seeing a single bird, before mayhem unfolds when suddenly we stumble upon a mixed-species flock containing twenty-five species (it has happened before!). As such, birding can be slow at times but exceptionally rewarding.

After our morning in the miombo, we will start the 120 mile (~190 km) drive to Iringa, birding in the Baobab Valley along the way. As the name suggests, enormous baobab trees and thorn scrub line the hillsides and valley floor along the Great Ruaha River, and we make a few key stops where we hope to see the endemic trio of **Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill**, **Yellow-collared Lovebird**, and **Ashy Starling**. These species are common on our Northern Tanzania - Introduction to Africa birding tour; however, today will be our only chance to see them on this tour. Other birds worth looking out for here include the attractive **Von der Decken's Hornbill**, **Meyer's Parrot**, **Spot-flanked** and **D'Arnaud's Barbet**, **Nubian Woodpecker**, **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater**, **Abyssinian Scimitarbill**, **Western Violet-backed**, **Marico** and **Gorgeous Sunbirds**, **Swahili Sparrow**, and **Black-faced Waxbill**.



Racket-tailed Roller will be one of our main targets in the miombo woodlands near Mikumi.

We will likely arrive in Iringa in the evening, have dinner, and get an early night. Tomorrow, we will return to the forests and spend the next two nights camping in the Udzungwa Mountains.

Overnight: [Iringa Sunset Hotel](#)



We hope to see the endemic Ashy Starling today.

Day 12. Udzungwa Scarp Forest birding

We have an early start today and make our way along roads that seem to get progressively worse as we get closer to our destination, Uluti Forest in the larger Udzungwa Scarp Forest Reserve. This large and remote reserve in the Udzungwa Mountains is home to several sought-after yet poorly known birds, and we will spend two nights camping at Kilambo Campsite to maximise our chances of finding our targets. After going as far as we can by car, we will cover the last distance to our campsite on foot.

Priority birds here include the endemic **Iringa Akalat**, **Tanzanian Illadopsis**, and **Rufous-winged Sunbird**, the rare **Dapple-throat** (this is almost certainly the best place in the world to see it, and it will be our second member of the Modulatricidae family), and the attractive **Swynnerton's Robin**. We'll also keep an eye out for **Churring** and **Black-lored Cisticolas** in the more open areas, and we will likely be serenaded by **African Wood Owls** as we fall asleep in our tents at night. Additionally, we have another chance at many of the birds mentioned under the descriptions for the earlier forest sites, like **Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon**, **Bar-tailed Trogon**, **African Broadbill**, **Spot-throat**, **White-chested Alethe**, **Sharpe's Akalat**, and **White-winged Apalis**, to name a few.

Overnight: Kilambo Campsite



The localized and colorful Swynnerton's Robin can be seen in Uluti Forest.

Day 13. Udzungwa Scarp Forest birding

We have another full day today to explore the Udzungwa Scarp Forest and to search for the target birds mentioned under the entry for yesterday. We will spend the night camping at Kilambo Campsite again.

Overnight: Kilambo Campsite

Day 14. Udzungwa Scarp Forest to Udzungwa Mountains (West)

Today will be mostly a travel day, with limited birding. After spending two nights at Kilambo Campsite we will make our way back to “civilization” for a few hours, descending towards Iringa and making our way to the small town of Ilula. Here, we will stock up on supplies before heading off towards the West Udzungwa Mountains for the next three nights. It goes without saying that the West Udzungwa Mountains and its special birds are tough to get to, and the only way to see them is to embark on a mini expedition. After some time on the road, we reach the Udekwa Ranger Post from where we will begin the hike to Chui Camp, our base for the night.

Overnight: Chui Camp



Cinnamon Bracken Warbler is common in the highlands of the Eastern Arc Mountains.

Days 15 – 16. Birding the Udzungwa Mountains (West)

The following two days are discussed as a single entry, as the plans for both days are similar. After an early breakfast, we start the steep hike up to Luaala Camp, where we will spend the next two nights. During our time here, we will explore the forest on foot, between 5,000 and 8,000 feet (1,500 - 2,400 m) above sea level, in search of our targets, the most exciting of which is the near-

mythical **Udzungwa Forest Partridge**. This elusive ground-dwelling bird is restricted to the remote reaches of the Udzungwa and Rubeho Mountains (the Rubeho birds are sometimes considered a separate species – Rubeho Forest Partridge), and the fact that it was only discovered as recently as 1991 is testament to its reclusive nature and inaccessibility.

While searching for the partridge, we are likely to stumble upon other excellent birds, such as the endemic and range-restricted **Kipengere Seedeater**, **Usambara Weaver** (we will have additional chances for this endemic in the Usambara Mountains, where it is more common), **Yellow-throated Mountain Greenbul** (along with six other greenbul species), and **Moreau's Sunbird**. Other species we may see here include **Spot-throat**, **Grey Cuckooshrike**, **Cinnamon Bracken Warbler**, **Olive-flanked Ground Robin**, **Waller's**, **Slender-billed**, and **Kenrick's Starlings**, and **Yellow-browed Seedeater**, to name only a few. Patches of montane grassland could yield **Scaly Spurfowl**, **African Yellow Warbler**, **Malachite Sunbird**, and nocturnal species such as **Montane Nightjar** and the scarce **African Grass Owl**. Raptors can often be seen soaring over the forests, and we may see **Mountain Buzzard** and **Crowed Eagle** during our time here. Although it is less common here than at the Udzungwa Scarp Forest, we will have another chance at seeing **Iringa Akalat** around our campsite.

Overnight: Luaala Campsite

Day 17. Transfer to Morogoro (or East Usambara Mountains)

Today will be a lengthy travel day with few birding opportunities. We plan to pack up our camp and descend the West Udzungwa Mountains, making our way back to the small town of Ilula, where we will join the main road and start the long 350 mile (563 km) drive to the East Usambara Mountains in northeastern Tanzania. On the way we hope to try for the attractive **Böhm's Bee-eater**, which can be seen at a couple of reliable stakeouts.

If we are delayed for any reason (travel times in Africa can be unpredictable at the best of times) and are unable to make it all the way in daylight, we will spend the night in Morogoro and continue the rest of the way in the morning.

Overnight: Morogoro or Amani Nature Reserve

Days 18 – 19. Amani Nature Reserve, birding the East Usambara Mountains

We have two full days to explore the exceptionally biodiverse East Usambara Mountains. The pristine afrotropical montane and lowland forests here fall mostly within the Amani Nature Reserve, a 20,000 acre (8,100 hectare) protected area boasting high levels of floral and faunal endemism. The proximity of these mountains to the coast (25 miles / 40 km) facilitates year-round moisture buildup and high annual rainfall (80 inches / 200 cm), allowing montane forest to grow at lower altitudes here than at any other site in Tanzania. Some of the more common species that we are likely to encounter in the montane forests include **Silvery-cheeked Hornbill**, **Tambourine Dove**, **Green and White-eared Barbets**, **Olive**, **Uluguru Violet-backed**, **Purple-banded**, and **Collared Sunbirds**, **Little and Shelley's Greenbuls**, **Green-headed Oriole**, and **Fischer's Turaco**.



*The elusive **Orange Ground Thrush** is always a joy to see!*

We will work carefully through all the sunbirds in the hope of connecting with the range-restricted **Amani Sunbird** and the localized endemic **Banded Green Sunbird**, the East Usambaras being the most reliable site for the latter. In the undergrowth, we may encounter a **Red-tailed Ant Thrush** following an ant swarm, or get a glimpse of a **Tanzanian Illadopsis** foraging on the forest floor, while the dense tangles may produce **Forest Batis**, the endemic **Montane Tiny Greenbul**, and **Long-billed Forest Warbler**. Fast-flowing mountain streams are the favored habitat of **Half-collared Kingfisher** and **Mountain Wagtail**, both of which are fairly common.

In the lowland forests, we will look out for **Green Tinkerbird**, **Mombasa Woodpecker**, **Chestnut-fronted Helmetshrike**, **Pallid Honeyguide**, **Little Yellow Flycatcher**, **Lowland Tiny**, and **Fischer's Greenbuls**, the endemic **Usambara Hyliota**, **Black-headed Apalis**, **Red-throated Twinspot**, and **Plain-backed Sunbird**. Birds of prey are well represented, and this will be our best chance to see **Southern Banded Snake Eagle**. At night, we will search for the endemic *vosseleri* subspecies of **Fraser's Eagle-Owl**, sometimes split as a separate species (Usambara Eagle-Owl), although recently re-lumped.

We expect to compile a sizeable list over our two days in Amani Nature Reserve. Next, we head to the West Usambara Mountains to target the remaining Usambara endemics.

Overnight: Amani Nature Reserve



We will look for *Chestnut-fronted Helmetshrike* in the lowland forests of the East Usambaras.

Days 20 – 21. West Usambara Mountains

As in the East Usambara Mountains, we will have two full days in the larger and higher West Usambara Mountains. As expected, there is significant species overlap between the two divisions of the Usambaras; however, a handful of species, such as the near-endemic **Usambara Double-collared Sunbird** (which is common at our lodge), are largely restricted to the west. Our base for the next two nights will be the charming Mullers Mountain Lodge, a former colonial farmhouse with picturesque views over the mountainous landscape and delicious, freshly prepared meals, with most ingredients sourced from the property's garden.

The Old Sawmill Track will be the primary focus of our birding efforts, and in these high-elevation montane forests we hope to see several special birds. Foremost among the targets will be the endemics, including **Usambara Thrush**, **Usambara Akalat**, **Montane Tiny Greenbul**, and **Usambara Weaver**. Additionally, we may see the attractive and delightfully common **Hartlaub's Turaco**, the near-endemic **Black-headed Mountain Greenbul**, the odd-looking **Sharpe's Starling**, the colorful **Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater**, and the relatively widespread **Streaky Seedeater**. Other high-quality birds that we will have another chance to see here include **Bar-tailed Trogon**, **Spot-throat**, **White-chested Alethe**, **Red-capped Forest Warbler**, **Cinnamon Bracken Warbler**, **Red-faced Crimsonwing**, and **Oriole Finch**. However, we expect to have seen most of these species by this stage of the trip. This is also likely to be one of our best chances for **Augur Buzzard**, and we will keep an eye skywards in the hope of seeing this attractive raptor.

Overnight: [Mullers Mountain Lodge](#)

Day 22. Transfer to Arusha via the South Pare Mountains

We will leave early this morning, descend the West Usambara Mountains, and begin the lengthy drive northwest to Arusha. Today will be a travel day with a few key birding stops. First, we will visit the South Pare Mountains in search of its sole endemic, the **South Pare White-eye**. The white-eye is common once we reach the right elevation near Shengena Peak, and the afro-tropical montane forests are also home to many of the same species as the Usambaras, giving us a final opportunity to enjoy some of the forest species with which we will now be well acquainted.

Next up, we will explore an area of thorn scrub. Here, a stack of new birds awaits us, and we may see **Slate-colored Boubou**, **Pringle's Puffback**, **Scaly Chatterer**, **Pink-breasted Lark**, **Eastern Violet-backed**, **Hunter's** and **Tsavo Sunbirds**, **Purple Grenadier**, and **Somali Bunting**, among others. We will then continue onwards to Arusha, skirting the slopes of Africa's tallest peak, Mount Kilimanjaro (16,100 feet / 4,900 m above sea level), before reaching the outskirts of the city. Time permitting, we may make a quick detour upon entering Arusha to try for the endemic **Broad-ringed White-eye**, which is easy to see on the lower slopes of Mount Meru, or the localized **Taveta Weaver**, which can be seen at sites in the city.

Overnight: Korona Villa Bed and Breakfast

Day 23. Lark Plains and departure

The plan for the final morning of the trip is to head north of Arusha to the arid "Lark Plains". The short, shrubby habitat here will be a stark contrast to the lush montane forests we have spent most of the trip in. Our main target here will be the incredibly localized **Beesley's Lark**, long considered a subspecies of the more widespread Spike-heeled Lark; it is now widely recognized as a separate species and is likely among the rarest in East Africa, occupying a total area of less than 2,500 acres (1,000 hectares)!

We have an excellent chance at seeing this bird, in addition to a host of other species typical of this habitat, most of which will be new for the trip, including **Kori Bustard**, **Eastern Chanting Goshawk**, **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse**, **White-bellied Go-away-bird**, **Red-and-yellow**, **Black-throated** and **Red-fronted Barbets**, **White-headed** and **Blue-naped Mousebirds**, **Capped Wheatear**, **Rosy-patched Bushshrike**, **Taita Fiscal**, **Superb** and **Hildebrandt's Starlings**, **Red-throated Tit**, **Pygmy Batis**, **Red-fronted Prinia**, **Grey Wren-Warbler**, **Buff-bellied Warbler**, **Banded Parisoma**, **White-bellied Canary**, **Southern Grosbeak-Canary**, **Kenya** and **Chestnut Sparrows**, **White-headed Buffalo Weaver**, and **Grey-capped Social Weaver**, among many others. If luck is on our side, we may find the adorable **Pygmy Falcon** here. It's not called "Lark Plains" just for **Beesley's Lark**, and we could see **Red-capped**, **Fawn-colored (Foxy)**, **Athi Short-toed**, **Sentinel**, and **Short-tailed Larks**, as well as **Fischer's Sparrow-Lark**, all of which are regularly seen here.

After what is sure to be a lifer-loaded morning, we will head back to Arusha at lunchtime. Time-dependent, we may try for the endemic duo of **Fischer's Lovebird** and **Rufous-tailed Weaver**, both of which can be seen at sites near the city, but are best targeted on our [Northern Tanzania - Introduction to Africa birding tour](#). At our accommodation, we will pack our bags, freshen up, and get ready for our evening departure flights. Our incredible Eastern Arc birding adventure will

conclude in Arusha this afternoon after 23 days exploring remote mountain peaks, lush forests, savannas, and arid plains in search of some of Africa's rarest and least known birds.



*The localized **Beesley's Lark** will be our primary target on the last morning.*

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.

Duration: 23 days
Group Size: 6
Dates: 1 - 23 September 2027
Start: Dar es Salaam
End: Arusha
Prices: TBD
Single Supplements: TBD

Price includes:

All accommodation
Meals (from lunch on Day 1 until lunch on Day 23)
Unlimited bottled water
Expert tour leader
Local birding guides
All entrance & conservation fees
All ground transport, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Price excludes:

International flights (to/from Tanzania)
Domestic flights (Required Dar es Salaam – Pemba – Dar es Salaam. We can book these for you and provide costs to ensure that everyone is on the same flight – estimate about \$320)
International airport taxes
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
Laundry service
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))
Visa
Personal travel insurance