

## **Itinerary, Angola Birding Essentials with Fangs and Feathers**



**FANGS & FEATHERS**  
WILDLIFE ADVENTURES

### **Angola Birding Essentials – Tour Itinerary**

**17 or 18 days**

**Compiled by: Matt Prophet**



**Braun's Bushshrike is one of the trip highlights**

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### **Tour Background**

This 17-day tour consists of 15 full days of birding and is designed for the adventure birder and traveller. It provides an excellent opportunity to seek the majority of Angola's 14 endemics within a relatively short time-frame.

Some of the days will involve long drives. On day 4 we drive from Kwanza to Uige, which is approximately five hours; On day 7 Uige to Kalandula will take four hours; Kalandula to Kumbira on day 9 will take 6 hours; Kumbira to Mount Moco on day 12 will take 5 hours and Huambo to Lubango on day 15 will take 8 hours.

The drives are very scenic with beautiful African landscapes. As we travel, we stop at sites along the way to look for birds and to take a stretch. These stops can be anything from 5 to 30 minutes long, depending on what birds are about. The locals we meet along the way are generally friendly and helpful and we consider the trip to be safe for travellers. Yellow Fever shots are mandatory and required prior to departure.

The trip is relatively quick paced, but in the hot lowlands the bird activity usually slows down from about 11:00 to 15:00. At higher elevations around Kumbira and Lubango the birds can be active for longer periods of time and, depending on the activity, we may elect to continue birding throughout the day. The more temperate areas near the coast and highlands are usually between 66-77°F (19-25°C) during Austral autumn to spring (April to August). The northern areas near Uige and Kalandula are usually warmer and more humid with temperatures ranging between 70-90°F (21-35°C).

The birding is considered to be easy to moderate in terms of the physical demands. We tend to remain in fairly close proximity to our vehicles when birding from the road edges. We do walk in some areas and distances may be up to 3km in total at one or two sites, but are generally less than 2km. If you are of moderate levels of fitness you should not have any trouble with the physical demands of the tour.

Food and accommodation are considered fair, given that the countries tourism sector is in its early stages of development, with visa requirements being relaxed for foreign visitors as recently as 2018. On a scale of low, medium and high class, the accommodation on this tour is set at medium class, with some evenings being in basic, rustic-styled chalets. The rooms are clean and serviced, with air-conditioning. It is important to measure your expectations on this tour, since things do take longer than expected at times and accommodation and meals might be laid out or presented in a way which is different to what you are familiar with. Angola is a very unique and interesting country with very different customs and cultures to most

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other parts of the world. There are times when things might not go according to plan and may be out of our control, some patience will be required while we resolve the issue. Some examples could include road deviations, road blocks, broken down trucks on roads which block our passage, and bush fires.

Meals typically consist of a choice between chicken, eggs, red meat and fish. Vegetables and salads are also standard and accompany most meals. Most dishes have a Portuguese flare and peri-peri (ground chilli) accompanies most meat dishes. We encourage you to discuss the accommodation and meals standards with us if more clarity is required.

A valid passport is required and must be valid for at least six months past your intended stay. Visas are required for almost all visitors, but can be obtained as E-visas or on arrival. Travel requirements are subject to change. Please be very sure of your entry requirements at least six weeks prior to departure. Feel free to make contact with us if you require any advice.

The trip cost includes:

- Accommodation;
- Local guides;
- Tips for staff at lodges and camps;
- All Meals, from dinner on day one to breakfast on day 17;
- Bottled drinking water;
- Fangs and Feathers tour leader;
- Spotting scope and bird calls;
- Transfers to and from airport;
- Any entrance fees to birding sites;
- IOC checklists generated off the IGoTerra system.

The trip cost excludes:

- Any International or domestic flights;
- Any tips for tour leaders;
- Snacks on-route;
- Additional drinks, apart from bottled water;
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Visa fees and travel insurance;
- Airport taxes if applicable;
- Excursions not included in the tour itinerary;
- Extras in hotels such as laundry service, minibars, room service, tips for optional luggage porters;
- Telephone calls;
- Personal items;
- Medical fees;

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- Other items or services not specifically mentioned as being included.

The birds mentioned in bold in this itinerary are those species which are endemic or near endemic to Angola or best sought in Equatorial Africa and not generally found in Southern Africa.

### Day 1 - Luanda to Kwanza River

*Note: Species in **bold** text where considered priority species on this tour, due to the level of endemism or rarity. What we considered to be secondary more wide-spread species are written in normal text.*

We will arrive in Luanda on an early morning flight from Johannesburg, South Africa. Once we have cleared customs, we will transfer to either Kwanza River Lodge or Carpe Diem Lodge (depending on availability at that time). For evening arrivals into Luanda, we will spend the first night at the well-appointed Fly Hotel (a four-star hotel), situated 10 minutes from the airport.

An early morning arrival gives us an opportunity to travel south to the Kwanza River and to stop in at Mussulo Bay to look for shorebirds, on route to our selected lodge. Mussulo Bay is one of the country's best shorebird-watching site and, if timed with a late spring visit, we can expect to see a wide range of migratory species, which would have started to arrive from the northern hemisphere. These species would include Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Ruddy Turnstone, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, White-fronted and Kittlitz's Plover, Collared Pratincole, Caspian Tern, Sandwich Tern, Grey-headed and Kelp Gull.

After checking-in at Kwanza River Lodge in the early afternoon, we will continue to bird the lodge grounds and Kwanza River shoreline. Some of the species we will target include: **Mangrove Sunbird, Royal Tern, Damara Tern, Bubbling Cisticola, Red-backed Mousebird, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Olive Bee-eater and Long-legged Pipit.**

An afternoon boat cruise up the Kwanza can also be arranged and could yield special birds such as **Egyptian Plover** and **Pel's Fishing Owl!**

Some of the secondary species expected on the first day could include Woodland, Malachite and Giant Kingfisher. Raptors could include African Fish Eagle, Western Osprey, Woolly-necked Stork, Water Thick-knee, Greater Flamingo, Palm-nut Vulture. Other sunbird species could include Purple-banded, Collared and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds.

### Day 2 - Full day Kissama National Park, overnight at Cabo Leido

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We will depart the lodge before sunrise with a packed breakfast, for a full day of birding into the dry baobab savannah of Kissama National Park. We will bird our way eastward towards Muxima. We will bird a combination of dry riverbeds and thickets for the difficult and localised endemics such as **Monteiro's Bushshrike** and **Grey-striped Spurfowl**. **White-throated Wattle-eye** another endemic is usually easier to locate, occurring alongside **Angola Batis**, **Red-backed Mousebird**, **Pale Olive Greenbul**, **Hartert's Camaroptera**. **Gabela Helmetshrike** occurs in mature acacia woodland and we hope to see this species in the eastern reaches of the park. Wetter areas adjacent to the coast should produce **Golden-backed Bishop**.



Red-backed Mousebird

Secondary species could include raptors such as Grey Kestrel, Palmnut Vulture, Brown Snake Eagle, Martial Eagle, Batleur, Lizard Buzzard, Little-banded Goshawk and African Goshawk. Both sough-after Böhm's and Mottled Spinetail frequent the baobab savannah. While bush birds include Yellow-breasted Apalis, Grey-tit Flycatcher, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Tropical Boubou, Forest Scrub Robin, Grey Go-away Bird, Brubru, Arrow-marked Babbler, White-crested Helmet Shrike, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Little Bee-eater, Blue Waxbill and the sought after Orange-winged Pytilia to name some of them.

After a long day out in the bush, we will return to the coast and overnight at the dramatic headland called Cabo Leido, situated on the Atlantic.

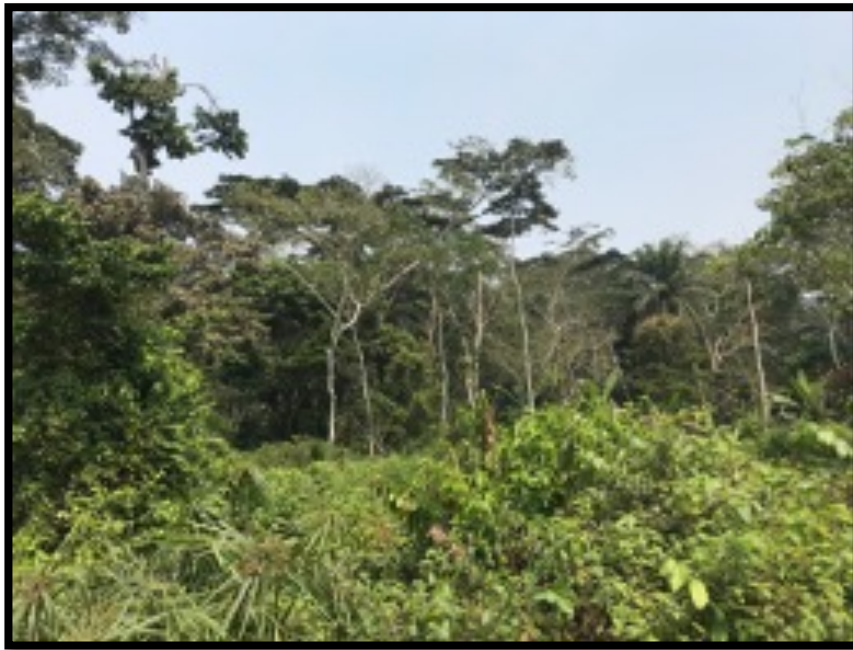
### Day 3 - Cabo Leido to Northern Scarp Forests

We will start the day with some early morning birding around the lodge before breakfast. After breakfast we will start our road trip to the northern scarp forests, where we will spend two full days birding. We expect to see a good diversity of

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exciting species, many of which are found in central Africa and no further south than this region.

Heading north of Luanda we will travel through some amazing looking Baobab savannah, like nowhere else in Africa! We then start to ascend into higher-lying forested countryside with large tracks of impenetrable forests. Roadside stops in this area could yield the scarce **White-bibbed Blue Swallow**. These stops might also produce species such as **Compact Weaver**, **Bubbling Cisticola**, **Village Weaver (race nigriceps)** **Red-backed Mousebird**, **Oustalet's Sunbird**, and **Buff-spotted Woodpecker** along with many other surprises.



The northern scarp forests

Secondary species could include Bateleur, African harrier Hawk, Black-winged Kite, Dark-capped Bulbul, Long-crested Eagle, Lesser-striped Swallow, Palm Swift, Little Bee-eater, Palmnut Vulture, Tambourine Dove, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove and Lilac-breasted Roller.

We should enter the new birding destination during the early afternoon and will proceed to bird the road edges on-route to our overnight hotel in the large regional town of Uige, situated approximately 120km south of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This happens to be the only practical place to base oneself at present. Each day we will travel from Uige to the Damengola Forests, returning to Uige in the late afternoon before dark. These beautiful forests lie across three main ridges, which run in a northwest and southeast direction and offer some of the most exciting forest birding in sub-equatorial Africa.

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On our first session in the Damengola Forests we will make our first attempt to see the striking and highly localised **Braun's Bushshrike**! This top bird frequents tangled secondary growth and, if we hear its obvious call, we stand a good chance of seeing it well. It is one of those species that any birder would wish for on their life-list.

Other species sought in secondary growth and nearby disturbed forest patches could include **Black-casqued Hornbill**, **Black-collared Bulbul**, **Perrin's Bushshrike**, **Many-coloured Bushshrike**, **Black-necked Weaver**, **Carmalite Sunbird**, **Velvet-mantled Drongo**, **Hartert's Camaroptera**, **Yellow-billed Barbet**, **Black and White Mannikin**, **Red-necked Buzzard**, **Grey Apalis**, **African Pied Hornbill**, **Grey Throated Tit Flycatcher**, **Dusky Blue Flycatcher**, **Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher**, **Olive Bellied**, **Green-headed**, **Bannerman's** and **Blue-throated Sunbird**, **Northern Yellow White-eye**, **Little Greenbul**, **Green Hylia**, **Green Crombec** and **White-breasted Nigrita**.



**Black Casque Hornbill**

Secondary species include the likes of African Pygmy Kingfisher, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Klaas's Cuckoo, African Emerald Cuckoo, African Paradise Flycatcher, Lesser-striped Swallow, Red-eyed Dove, African Green Pigeon, Black-throated Wattle-eye, Broad-billed roller, Yellow-throated Leaflove, and Black Saw-wing.

### **Day 4, 5 & 6 - Northern Scarp Forests (Damengola)**

Over the course of the next three days we will bird the Damengola Forest area. The forests are dense and still intact. Birding the edges and along tracks cut into them, is the practical way to go about things. We will try again for **Braun's Bushshrike** if we were unsuccessful during the previous afternoon's attempt, since it is such an important bird for us on this tour.

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Three species of Turacos are possible in these forests, namely the hugely impressive **Great Blue Turaco**, **Guinea Turaco** although tricky to obtain views, along with the beautiful **Red-crested Turaco** Angola's national bird.

Other special birds we could encounter during the following days may include **Afep Pigeon**, **Western Bronze-naped Pigeon**, **Blue Malkoa**, **Blue-throated Roller**, **Red-fronted Parrots**, **Black-bellied Seed-eater**, **Piping and Black-casqued Hornbill**, **Velliot's Black Weaver**, **Slender-billed Weaver**, **Black-necked Weavers** **Blue-breasted Kingfisher**, **Chocolate-backed Kingfisher**, **Many-coloured Bushshrike**, **Bocage's Bushshrike**, **Pink-footed Puffback**, **Yellow-crested Woodpecker**, **Brown-eared Woodpecker**, **Angola White-throated Greenbul**, **Simple Greenbul**, **Black-throated Apalis**, **Chestnut Wattle-eye**, **Yellow-Longbill**, **Red-headed Malimbe**, **Forest Scrub Robin**, **Brown Illadopsis**, **Rufous-crowned Eremomela**, **Brown Twinspot**.

Uncommon species include **Woodhouse's Antpecker**, **Red-rumped Tinkerbird**, **Yellow-throated Cuckoo**, **African Shrike Flycatcher**, **Scaly-breasted Illadopsis** and **Pale-fronted Nigrita**, **African Piculet**, **Tit-Hylia** and **Cassin's Hawk Eagle**. During our exploratory trip in August 2019 we heard **Vermiculated Fishing Owl** while camped on the edge of a section of forest one evening.



**Black Bee-eater**

Fruiting trees are brilliant places to watch closely as they attract species such as **Speckled Tinkerbird**, **Bristle-nosed** and **Hairy-breasted Barbet**, **Falkenstein's (yellow-necked) Greenbul**, **Honeyguide Greenbul**, **Yellow-whiskered Greenbul**, **Plain Greenbul**, **Black-winged Oriole**. Starlings occurring here include **Splendid**, **Chestnut-winged** and **Narrow-tailed Starling**.

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Clearings within the forests and secondary growth include **Purple-throated** and **Petit's Cuckooshrike**, **White-collared Oliveback**, **Black Bee-eater**, **Grey-headed Nigrita**, **White-breasted Nigrita**, **Black-collared Bulbul**, **Slender-billed Greenbul**, **Red-tailed Bristlebill**, **Chattering Cisticola**, **Black-faced Canary**, **Yellow-throated Nicator**, **Banded** and **White-chinned Prinia**, **Forest Swallow**, **Mackinnon's Shrike**, **Landana Firefinch**, **Northern Fiscal**, **Brown-backed Scrub Robin** and **Congo Serpent Eagle**.



Superb Starling

Grassy margins and wet areas produce **Black-winged Bishop**, **Yellow-mantled Widow**, **Red-headed Quelea** and **Orange-cheeked Waxbill**.

Secondary species, which we place less emphasis on, could include Olive Sunbird, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Grey-headed Parrot, African Broadbill, African Crowned Hornbill, Grey Waxbill, Tawny flanked Prinia, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Common Waxbill, Moustached Grass Warbler, African Yellow Warbler to name just some of them.

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White-collared Oliveback

### Day 7 - Uige to Kalandula area

Departing Uige, we make our way to the Kalandula area (about six hours by road) where we will look for the spectacular and localised **White-headed Robin Chat**, a dream bird for most world listers. We stop frequently along our route in a variety of habitat types including miombo woodland, rivers and grasslands. The birds are diverse and we expect to collect species such as **Long-legged Pipit**, **Black Scimitarbill**, **Red-Throated (Angola) Cliff Swallow**, **Angola Swallow**, **Red-backed Mousebird**, **Grey-chinned Sunbird**, **African Pied Hornbill** and possibly the gorgeous **Black-throated Wattle-eye** in swamp forest at one or two river crossings.

Secondary species on the drive could include a wide diversity of savannah species such as Red-breasted Swallow, African Hoopoe, Swamp Boubou, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Copper Sunbird, Batleur, African Hawk Eagle, Martial Eagle and Broad-billed Roller.

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Kalandula Falls

A stop at the spectacular Kalundulla Falls on the Lucala River is worthwhile, as the grandeur of this natural wonder is very impressive and unexpected. We won't spend much time here as the falls tend to be busy. After checking-in at our accommodation in the town of Kalandula, we will make our way to some nearby Miombo woodland to do some afternoon birding, if time allows. There are fantastic woodland and riverine birds species in the area and we hope to see specials like **Sharp-tailed Starling** and **Anchieta's Barbet** without too much difficulty. The latter being highly prized and difficult to find elsewhere. There is also a good chance of **Red-crested Turaco**, whose call usually gives its presence away. Sunbirds could include, **Anchieta's, Bannerman's, Bate's, Green-throated** and **Carmalite Sunbird**. The seasonal fluctuations in bird diversity here is poorly known, but the following could well be seen, **Red-headed Lovebird, Velliot's Black Weaver, Landana Firefinch, Orange-cheeked Waxbill, Perrin's Bushshrike, Black-winged Oriole, White-winged Black Tit, Whistling Cisticola** and **Miombo Wren Warbler**.

River courses and wet areas could produce **Shining Blue Kingfisher, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Fullebörn's Longclaw, White-bibbed Swallow, Brazza's Martin** and **Compact Weaver**.

Other desirable wetland species hard to come by in Southern Africa include Marsh Tchagra and Moustached Grass Warbler.

Some of the secondary species could include the likes of the beautiful Ross's Turaco, Thick-billed Cuckoo, Black Cuckooshrike, Green-capped Eremomela, Striped Kingfisher, Violet-backed Starling, Broad-tailed Paradise and Eastern Paradise Whydah, Orange-winged Pytilia, Square-tailed Drongo, Retz's Helmetshrike, Black-

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crowned Tchagra, Blue-spotted and Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Lizard Buzzard, Little-banded Goshawk, Scarlet-chested, Copper Sunbird and Western Violet-backed Sunbird (common here), Black-backed Puffback, Green Twinspot, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Miombo Scrub Robin, Meyer's Parrot, Chinspot Batis, African Golden Oriole, Golden-breasted Bunting, African Barred Owlet, Yellow-throated Petronia, Fan-tailed and Yellow-mantled Widowbird. The highly sought-after Pennant-winged Nightjar also occurs in the area and Fiery-necked Nightjar is common here.



Yellow Whiskered Greenbul

There is no doubt that there are many other birding surprises in the greater area and it is just a matter of getting into these environments and the rewards could be great!

### Day 8 - Kallundulla Forests

We will make our way to the Kinjila area, about a 30-minute drive from Kalandula. Our main target for the morning is the **White-headed Robin Chat**, which we will attempt to locate and see during the morning. This large and spectacular robin chat has only been seen by a few hundred birders globally and is known from a handful of sites between the DRC and Angola.

**Grey-winged Robin Chat**, another sought after species also occurs in these small patches of lowland forest. **Red-crested Turaco** occurs along with **Ross's Turaco**, both prized birds.

If we are successful in finding these birds during the morning spell, we will bird the surrounding miombo woodlands and wetland areas during the latter half of the day. The uncommon and localised **Bocage's Weaver** is another species we hope to see.

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The tricky **Pale-Olive Greenbul** occurs in secondary growth and can also be tough to locate.

### Day 9 - Kallundulla to Kumbira Forest

We will have a few hours on our last morning in this area to try again for species which we might have missed. Hereafter we will begin our journey back west to the Gabela highlands, which lie south of Luanda. This is one of the endemic hotspots in the country where we will spend time birding Kumbira Forest and the surrounding area.

Arriving in the afternoon at Fazenda Rio Uiri, a working fruit farm with serviced rooms and a restaurant, we will check-in and spend the afternoon birding the local area. Birds such as **Grey Kestrel**, **Ansorge's Firefinch**, **Orange-cheeked Waxbill**, **Red-crested Turaco**, **Petit's Cuckooshrike**, **Falkenstein's Greenbul** are likely. More widespread secondary species would include birds such as African Harrier Hawk, Blue and Common Waxbill, Dark-capped Bulbul, Bronze Mannikin, Square-tailed Drongo, Tawny Flanked Prinia, Emerald Spotted Wood Dove, and African Yellow White-eye.



Angola is criss-crossed with rivers and waterways

### Day 10 & 11 - Kumbira Forest area, overnight Fazenda Rio Uiri

Each morning we will travel to the Kumbira Forest, approximately 45 minutes away, to seek out target birds. There are also other local forest patches where we will try for the highly localised and endangered **Gabela Bushshrike**, a key bird in this area. Kumbira Forest was always the best place to find this species, but unfortunately due to habitat destruction, it no longer occurs in the accessible parts of the main forest reserve that we know of, having attempted to find it there in 2019.

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**Gabela Akalat**

The unobtrusive **Gabela Akalat** can be found in old neglected tea plantations that have now become forests. This trusting little endemic can only be found in this area and we stand a good chance of seeing them. Other special species include the strange looking **Naked-faced Barbet**, impressive **Red-headed Bluebill**, **Pink-footed Puffback**, **Superb** and **Little Green** and **Olive-bellied Sunbird**, **Rufous Thrush**, **Northern Scrub Robin**, **Brown-eared Woodpecker**, **Yellow-throated Nicator**, **Yellow-whiskered Greenbul**, **Red-crested Turaco**, **Falkenstein's Greenbul**, **Angola Batis**, **Green Crombec**, **Red-necked Buzzard**, **Black-faced Canary**, **Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher**. Trickier species occurring here include the elusive **Gabon Coucal** and **White-spotted Flufftail**. The endemic and sought-after **Pulitzer's Longbill** is another special we will be listening out for as it creeps around the tangles.



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### Brown-eared Woodpecker

Further specials could include **White-tailed Blue Flycatcher**, **Dusky Tit**, **Black-necked Weaver**, **Red-backed Mousebird**, **Bubbling Cisticola**, **Hartert's Camaroptera**, **Black and White Mannikin**, **Landana Firefinch**, **Green-backed Woodpecker**, **Angolan Batis**, **Buff-throated Apalis**, **Grey-headed Nigrita**, **Green Hylia** and the very striking **Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye** and **Chestnut Wattle-eye**. The gloomy bits of the forest host skulking species such as **Brown-chested Alethe** and **Brown Illadopsis**, they are usually heard, but difficult to see.

Further species included Grey Waxbill, Purple-banded Sunbird, Blue Waxbill, Southern Hyliota, Black-winged Bishop, African Broadbill, African Emerald Cuckoo, African Dusky Flycatcher, African Green Pigeon, Tamborine Dove, Crowned Hornbill and African Wood Owl. The forest could also reveal raptors such as Brown Snake Eagle, Long-crested Eagle, Lizard Buzzard, Augur Buzzard, African Goshawk and the mighty Crowned Eagle.



Kumbira Forest

### Days 12 - Kumbira Forest to Mount Moco

We will leave the Gabela Highlands to make our way to Mount Moco, Angola's highest mountain, in the Huambo district. Here we will look for a range of new bird species not encountered yet on the tour. The drive will take us approximately 8 hours depending on the condition of the road and any deviations we may be faced with. We will camp at the base of the mountain, near a local community, for three nights. Each person will have their own tent and our support team will set these up and prepare the meals. Day 13 will most likely be used to bird the mountain as this

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takes a full day. How far we bird up the mountain, which takes a good degree of fitness, will depend on the group sentiment at the time. Day 14 would be used to cover the grassland-covered hills, and drainage lines between them, which contain a number of specials, and an interesting diversity of species already mentioned.



Red-throated Cliff Swallow

### Day 13 &14 - Mount Moco

There are two main components to this area, the mountain and the grasslands below. To bird the mountain requires a good degree of fitness and takes the better part of the day. This walk is required for birders wanting to try for species such as **Margaret's Batis** and **Bocage's Akalat**. **Swiestra's Francolin** occurs on the forest edges and may be encountered lower down the mountain.

Other forest dwellers include **Western Tinkerbird**, **Evergreen Forest Warbler**, **African Hill Babbler** and **Angola Slaty Flycatcher**. **Black-chinned Weaver** is a localised resident and there is a good chance of seeing **Angolan Waxbill** and the elusive **Dusky Twinspot**.

On approach to Mont Moco one passes through some stunted Miombo Woodland which hosts a good range of species. The targets here include the potentially difficult **Black-necked** and **Salvadori's Eremomela**.

The open grassland areas host a wide variety of specials including **Angola Swallow**, **Black and Rufous Swallow**, **Angola Lark**, **Yellow-crowned Canary**, **Ansorge's Firefinch**, **Leppe Cisticola**, **Black-faced Canary** and the scarce **Bocage's Sunbird**, which is fond of rank secondary growth in between the grassy hills. **Black-collared Bulbul**, **Red-backed Mousebird**, **Moustached Grass Warbler**, **Cabanis's Greenbul** can be found in secondary growth. The Rocky mountain slopes host **Rock-loving**

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**Cisticola (Huambo Cisticola)** and more widespread Striped and Long-billed Pipit and Mountain Wheatear. **Ludwig's Double Collared Sunbird** does occur, along with the quite common **Oustalet's Sunbird** and we will keep an eye open for flowering shrubs and trees along the way, which could attract these species.



**Black-collared Bulbul**



**A sub-adult Black-necked Eremomela**

Secondary species across the area could include Black-bellied Bustard, White-fronted Bee-eater, African Marsh Harrier, Buffy Pipit, Red-capped Lark, Yellow-eyed and Capped Wheatear, Black-Saw-wing, Lesser-striped, Greater Striped and Grey-rumped Swallow, White Helmet Shrike, African Paradise Flycatcher, Hamerkop, African Yellow Warbler, Klaas's Cuckoo, Buffy Pipit, Yellow-eyed and Brimstone Canary,

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Thick-billed Seed-eater, Schalow's Turaco, Black-collared Barbet, Croaking Cisticola, Wailing Cisticola, Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, Olive Woodpecker, Red-throated Wryneck.

### **Day 15 - Mount Moco to Lubango, overnight Casper Lodge or other**

We will depart Mount Moco and make our way for the southern high-lying town of Lubango. This drive will take us approximately seven hours. We will make regular stops during the drive to stretch our legs and look at birds along the way. Our accommodation for the final two nights will be at Casper Lodge or similar, which is close to the impressive Tunduvulla escarpment where we will spend the following morning birding for a variety of very special species.

### **Day 16 & 17 - Serra da Chela Escarpment and departure.**

We spend one full day birding the escarpment habitats outside of Lubango for a host of special birds in what are spectacular surrounds. On day 17 we will have time to bird the area in the morning before your flights back to Luanda from where you will either fly home from or spend the night at Fly Hotel to connect with your outbound flight the following morning. You may opt for the two-day extension when booking this tour, which adds another two days making this a 19 day tour. The benefit of this equates to obtaining desert species usually sought in neighbouring Namibia to the south., which is discussed in more detail below.

The main attraction around Lubango is the impressive Serra da Chela escarpment rising to 2300m at its highest point. The area offers a combination of higher altitude grassland habitat, steep drop-offs and secondary growth and forests and we will visit the impressive Tundavulla gap which displays vertical drops of around 800m down to the coastal plains below.

**Angolan Cave Chat** and **Finch's Francolin** are key targets for us on the first day. The cave chat is a special and beautiful bird can be located with relative ease. This near-endemic occurs in the highland environments of western Angola and from the Zebra Mountains remote northern Namibia. **Rockrunner**, which also occurs in neighbouring Namibia, is also found in the area and a species we hope to see.

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Angolan Cave Chat

Two very special gamebirds also occur, namely the endemic **Swiestra's** and near-endemic **Finch's Francolin**. The former occurs in montane forest edge and we might get a glimpse of this rare species at Mount Moco. If we miss it there, then we have another chance in this area. The latter occurs in the rocky grassland habitats along the escarpment and may be flushed as we walk through the area in the early morning.

We also plan to travel down the spectacular mountain pass called the Leba. The amazing feat of Portuguese engineering is one of the most spectacular mountain passes in Africa. Looking at it from a distance, it resembles a piece of spaghetti laid out in a zigzag pattern. Species we hope to find in the lower reaches of the pass, include the sought-after **Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird**, **Angolan Waxbill**, **Angolan Batis**, **Angola Slaty Flycatcher**, **Pale-olive Greenbul**, **Western Tinkerbird**. **Bocage's Akalat** occurs in the area and might be seen if we manage to bird some undisturbed forest patches. **Angola White-headed Barbet** confined to the escarpment around Lubango, which has only been seen by a handful of birders since it's recent rediscovery, will also be on our radar.

The habitat on lower slopes is a transitional vegetation type, comprising of Acacias and other dry savannah woodland species. We might have time to bird this area on day 16 depending on our progress with the higher elevation species. There's a good chance for specials such as **Hartlaub's Babbler**, **Benguela Long-tailed Starling** and possibly the sought-after **Cinderella Waxbill**.

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**Rockrunner**

Secondary species occurring across the lower and higher altitudes of the escarpment include: Bradfield's Swift, Black Saw-wing, Alpine, African Black Swift and African Rock Martin, Rufous-naped Lark, Southern Fiscal Collared Sunbird, Olive and Bennet's Woodpecker, Buffy Pipit, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Ashy Flycatcher, Blue and Violet-eared Waxbills. Raptors could include the impressive Verreaux's Eagle seen patrolling the escarpment drop-offs and Booted Eagle, Batleur, Augur Buzzard and Rock Kestrel. Owls occurring the region included Spotted Eagle Owl, Southern White-faced and African Scops Owl.

**End of 17-day tour. Fly from Lubango to Luanda for connecting flights (possible overnight in Luanda)**

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### **Extension Option**

An extra night will give us the opportunity to spend a full day birding for Namib Desert specials occurring between Lubango and Port Namibe on the Atlantic Coast. We have added this option, since it offers one the opportunity to try for desert species usually found in northern Namibia. This requires a full days to drive down the escarpment to the coast, birding on-route. We would overnight at a hotel in Port Namibe and return to Lubango the following day.

### **Day 17 and 18 Lubango to Namib, return to Lubango.**

The road trip from Lubango takes us to the Atlantic coastal town of Port Namibe. We will spend the first part of the day birding the lowlands below pass as we progress into the northern most part of the Namib Desert Biome. **Cinderella Waxbill,**

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email: [fangsfeathers@gmail.com](mailto:fangsfeathers@gmail.com)**

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**Hartlaub's Babbler** and **Benguela Long-tailed Starling** are birds we will work to locate. The arid bushveld along the first part of the day is also home to the sought-after **Rüppell's Parrot**, **Dusky Sunbird**, **Karoo Chat**, **Monteiro's Hornbill**, **Carp's Tit** and possibly **Chestnut Weaver**.



**Rüppell's Parrot**

Some of the secondary species in this zone include: Cape Sparrow, Southern Fiscal, Chat Flycatcher, Grey- Go-away Bird, Red-faced Mousebird, African Red-eyed Bulbul, White-crested Helmet Shrike, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Yellow and White-throated Canary, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Pirit Batis, Cape Penduline Tit, Scaly Feathered Finch, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Black-chested Prinia, Namaqua Dove, Chestnut Vented Warbler and Namaqua Sandgrouse. This list is not comprehensive but highlights some of the species, which we should see, usually sought in the Namib, Karoo biomes.

The habitat changes from arid savannah to desert very quickly as we approach the coast. Typical Namib Biome specials are now sought as we go into lark mode. **Stark's** and **Benguela Long-billed Lark** are the main ones and we hope to see both species. **Rüppell's Korhaan** and **Ludwig's Bustard** are two large species, which we will keep an eye open for, the latter with a restricted range with the latter occurring throughout the arid zone of sub-equatorial Africa but at low densities.

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**Benguela Long-billed Lark**

Other birds could include Spike-heeled Lark, Red-capped Lark, Grey-backed Sparrow Lark, Trac-trac Chat (the white desert form), Double-banded Courser, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Greater Kestrel and Pale-winged Starling.

Reaching Namib in the afternoon we will visit the coast and spend the remainder of our time trying for seabirds. If lucky we may obtain a view of **Royal Tern**. Other species could include **Damara Tern**. Other more common terns could include Common and Sandwich Tern during the Austral summer and resident Caspian Tern. Early summer trips, before the rains would include shorebirds such as Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Little Stint, Common Greenshank and Whimbrel with possibilities of other species. Species usually seen in Southern Africa can include Greater and Lesser Flamingo, Cape Teal, Cape and White-breasted Cormorant, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, the sought after Chestnut-banded, Kittlitz's and White-fronted Plover. Kelp and Grey-headed Gull are the two resident species.

The following mornings birding will depend on what time your connecting flight from Lubango to Luanda departs. If we can, we will either do a few hours of coastal birding or travel back towards Lubango searching for species you may want to prioritise. The drive to Lubango airport will take approximately three hours.

This tour will be like none other you have ever experienced and will prove to be truly memorable.

If you would like to enquire, please email Matt at [fangsfeathers@gmail.com](mailto:fangsfeathers@gmail.com), or alternately [matt@fangsandfeathers.co.za](mailto:matt@fangsandfeathers.co.za)  
mobile: +27 60 983 8513. Whatsapp text or call is also very good way to contact me.