

Reach Africa Birding and Getaways



1

Email:
birding@reachafrica.co.za

Tel: 011-4757436
Cell: 0825772102

P.O Box 409
Allens Nek
1737
Roodepoort, South Africa

Image: © Per Holmen

ZIMBABWE

13 DAY TRIP : 31 January to 12 February 2012

At 390,624 sq km, Zimbabwe is three times as large as England and about half the size of Texas.

This land-locked country is a true paradise for birders, with a total of more than 650 species having been recorded.

Although there are no endemics in Zimbabwe, the country boasts more than 50 species of birds that do not occur in South Africa.

The majority of these “specials” can be found in the focus area of our trip as we have carefully selected those destinations that will afford us the best chance of seeing the targeted species.

Most of the miombo woodland birds are resident and birding is usually good throughout the year. Exceptions are the migrant Tree Pipit and Collared Flycatcher which are summer visitors.

This is usually a good time of year for rallids and other wet grassland species which are nomadic and move into the area when the conditions are suitable after summer rains.

THE DESTINATIONS

Our first port of call is **Lake Mutirikwe and Great Zimbabwe**, near Masvingo, some 300km north of Beit Bridge

The habitat in the area is varied and includes granite cliffs, outcrops of large boulders called “dwalas”, rocky shoreline, miombo woodland, acacia thornveld and open grassland. On the windward slopes of the hills are small patches of evergreen forest

We spend our first night in a charming and intimate hotel situated near the Great Zimbabwe National Monument

Our next home for two nights in **Harare** is **Crake Cottage**, a birder-friendly guest house at the edge of Monavale Vlei, one of the prime Zimbabwe wetland birding spots. Besides offering excellent hospitality and very good birding, this will be the base from which we will explore the birding hotspots. All of the birding sites are easily accessible from here. Harare lies in the centre of the miombo woodland belt in Zimbabwe, savanna woodland made up of several species of *Brachystegia*.

Harare also provides an excellent base for vlei birding, the best time to visit being during the summer months, after rain.

Our next birding destination is Marondera, some 80km south-east of the capital, Harare. The **Marondera** area boasts some 380 species and is home to some extremely sought after Zimbabwean specials. Although best known for its miombo woodland birds, grassland and water birds are well represented. Marondera is situated on the central watershed at a height of 1660m. The combination of high rainfall and warm to hot summers has created ideal conditions for the growth of the miombo woodlands, which are a feature of the Mashonaland Plateau.





We spend two nights at a comfortable **guest house**, on a farm just outside Marondera. The farm itself is a birding hotspot and is within easy reach of all the best birding locations.

The **Nyanga** area boasts some of the most spectacular scenery in Zimbabwe. Mountains, rivers and gorges, montane grassland and forest, exotic and miombo woodland and man-made dams, all within a wide range of altitudes reaching up to 2500m, make this a most invigorating

birding area. The highest waterfall in Zimbabwe, the Mtarazi Falls, is reached via lovely montane forest

We spend one night in comfortable chalets, situated a stone's throw away from the Mtarazi Falls.

The **Honde Valley**, a prime birding destination, is one of the most picturesque areas in Zimbabwe. It offers a wide range of species difficult to find in other parts of the region. The low-lying valley (850m) is in an area of high rainfall and one of the major tea producing regions of Zimbabwe.

Habitats are varied and include montane forest (fast disappearing), riverine forest, marsh, miombo woodland, tea plantations and cultivated lands.

We spend two nights at **Aberfoyle Lodge** in comfortable accommodation.

The Bvumba Highlands lie approximately 25km above the city of Mutare and offer exciting and varied birding opportunities. Habitats within this area are varied and include montane grassland, montane forest, miombo woodland and exotic plantations.

We spend three nights at Seldomseen Cottages, one of Zimbabwe's best known birding destinations.

We take our leave of the Bvumba and travel via Masvingo to our last overnight stop at the **Lion and Elephant Motel**, situated on the Bubi River, some 85km from the South African Border at Beit Bridge

BIRDING ATTRACTIONS

Lake Muturikwe and Great Zimbabwe

Augur Buzzard, Shelley's Francolin, African Golden Oriole, Miombo Rock-Thrush, Southern Hyliota, Green-backed Honeybird, Miombo Double-collared Sunbird, Variable Sunbird, Red-faced Crombec, White-breasted Cuckooshrike, Grey Penduline Tit and Black-eared Seedeater.

Harare and environs

Streaky-breasted Flufftail, Red-chested Flufftail, Striped Crake, African Crake, Lesser Moorhen, Broad-tailed Warbler, Rosy-throated Longclaw, Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Copper Sunbird, Cuckoo Finch, Black Coucal, Pale-crowned Cisticola, Boulder Chat, Western Marsh-Harrier, African Grass-Owl

Marondera

Wood Pipit, Tree Pipit, Collared Flycatcher, Boulder Chat, Whyte's Barbet, Black-eared Seedeater, Spotted Creeper, Miombo Blue-eared Starling, Southern Hyliota, Stierlings's Wren-warbler, Variable Sunbird, Miombo Double-collared Sunbird, Miombo Rock-Thrush, Green-capped Eremomela, White-breasted Cuckooshrike, Miombo Tit, Rufous-bellied Tit, Yellow-mantled Widowbird.



Nyanga area

Nyanga area

Blue Swallow, Scarce Swift, Mottled Swift, Augur Buzzard, Peregrine Falcon, Singing Cisticola, Broad-tailed Warbler, Eastern Saw-wing, Roberts's Warbler, Chirinda Apalis, Gurney's Sugarbird, Yellow-bellied Waxbill, Bronzy Sunbird, Variable Sunbird, Blue-spotted Wood-Dove, Whyte's Barbet.

Honde Valley

Palm-nut Vulture, Anchieta's Tchagra, Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo, Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon, Scarce Swift, Pallid Honeyguide, Green-backed Woodpecker, Blue-spotted Wood-Dove, Moustached Grass-Warbler, White-tailed Crested Flycatcher, Stripe-cheeked Greenbul, Red-throated Twinspot, Green Twinspot, Singing Cisticola, Short-winged Cisticola, Black-winged Bishop.

Bvumba (Seldomseen, Vumba Botanical Gardens, Cecil Kop NR, Mutare)

Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Gurney's Sugarbird, Black-fronted Bush-Shrike, Swynnerton's Robin, Orange Ground-Thrush, Red-faced Crimsonwing, Chirinda Apalis, Roberts's Warbler, Stipe-cheeked Greenbul, Blue-spotted Wood-Dove, Bronzy Sunbird, Buff-spotted Flufftail, Variable Sunbird, Twinspot Indigobird, Orange-winged Pytilia, Miombo Double-collared Sunbird, Eastern Saw-wing, Mottled Swift, Yellow-bellied Waxbill, Rufous-bellied Tit, Miombo Tit, Cabanis's Bunting, Southern Hyliota, Miombo Rock-Thrush, Whyte's Barbet.