



Uganda

The Pearl of Africa

Tour Leader: Rob Ripma

August 25 - September 9, 2026

Itinerary Overview:

August 25: Arrival at Entebbe International Airport and Birding the Botanical Gardens
August 26: Shoebills at Mabamba Swamp and Travel to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary
August 27: Morning Birding and Rhino Trek. Afternoon Transfer to Murchison Falls National Park
August 28: Morning Game Drive, Afternoon Boat Cruise, and Evening/Night Drive
August 29: Drive to Masindi with Birding Along the Way
August 30: Birding in Budongo Forest-Royal Mile
August 31: Transfer to Kibale Forest National Park
September 1: Chimp Tracking and Birding
September 2: Kibale to Queen Elizabeth National Park
September 3: Morning Birding/Safari and Afternoon Boat Cruise on the Kazinga Channel
September 4: Queen Elizabeth National Park to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park
September 5: Gorilla Tracking at Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park
September 6: Birding the Main Trail at Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park
September 7: Bwindi to Lake Mburo National Park
September 8: Boat Ride in Lake Mburo National Park
September 9: Lake Mburo to Entebbe for Departure

Detailed Itinerary:

August 25: Arrival at Entebbe International Airport and Birding the Botanical Gardens

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be transferred to the hotel. If time permits, we will bird at the botanical gardens.

-Overnight: Boma Hotel Entebbe or similar

August 26: Shoebills at Mabamba Swamp and Travel to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary

After an early breakfast, we will set off for nearby Mabamba Swamp on the shores of Lake Victoria. This is one of the few remaining swamps in the country and is protected by the local communities. It is an extensive papyrus swamp with a labyrinth of channels and lagoons. It's classified as an Important Bird Area and is home to several pairs of Shoebills, Uganda's most famous avian resident. This charismatic mono-typic species is certainly amongst the most sought-after birds in Africa, and we'll make special efforts to find it by paddling through the channels by boat. There will of course be a good selection of classic East African water birds to be found as well such as Long-tailed Cormorant, Goliath Heron, African Openbill, Saddle-billed and Marabou Storks, Hamerkop, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Yellow-billed Duck, African Fish-Eagle, African Marsh-Harrier, African Rail, Purple Swamphen, Allen's Gallinule, African Jacana, and Long-toed and Spur-winged Plovers.

In addition to the numerous water birds, we are likely to see a nice variety of open country and water edge species which may including Speckled Pigeon, African Green-Pigeon, Eastern Plantain-eater, Malachite, Giant, and Pied Kingfishers, Blue-headed Coucal, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Crowned

Hornbill, Angola and Rufous-chested Swallows, Winding Cisticola, Greater and Lesser Swamp Warblers, Gray-capped Warbler, Papyrus Yellow-Warblers, Swamp Flycatcher, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Papyrus Gonolek, Slender-billed, Northern Brown-throated, and Golden-backed Weavers, and Papyrus Canary.



Shoebill

After an amazing morning in the swamp, we'll make an afternoon transfer to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary with some birding along the way.

-Overnight: Amuka Safari Lodge

August 27: Morning Birding and Rhino Trek. Afternoon Transfer to Murchison Falls National Park

After breakfast, we'll leave for an exciting morning of rhino tracking and birding. Bird species to look out for include Bronze-tailed, Ruppell's, and Purple-headed Starling, Bruce's and African Green-Pigeons, Northern Crombec, African Golden Oriole, and so many others, but the highlight will undoubtedly be the incredible White Rhinos that call this sanctuary home.

In the afternoon, we will transfer to Murchison Falls National Park with birding along the way. After crossing the Nile River, we will drive through the vast Murchison Falls National Park that Cape Buffalos, Lelwel Hartebeests, African Elephants, African Lions, Oribi, Common Duiker, and Uganda Kob call home.

-Overnight: Pakuba Safari Lodge

August 28: Morning Game Drive, Afternoon Boat Cruise, and Evening/Night Drive

After an early breakfast, our day will begin with a morning game drive. In the lush Bourassa's grassland, we may encounter African Elephant, Cape Buffalo, Rothschild Giraffe, and a variety of antelope. We may also see some lions if we are lucky. After enjoying a packed lunch, we'll take an afternoon boat trip to the bottom of Murchison Falls. We may have another chance to see Shoebill, and we'll also be dazzled with a variety of other birds from the boat including species like the Secretary Bird, Abyssinian Roller, Abyssinian Ground Hornbill, Pied Kingfisher, Blue-breasted and Red-throated Bee-eaters, Goliath Heron, Saddle-billed Stork, Sacred Ibis, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Senegal Thick-knee, Black-headed Lapwing, Long-toed Lapwing, Little Bittern, Osprey, Red-necked Falcon, Vinaceous Dove, and Grosbeak Weaver. Other specialties may include Buff-bellied Warbler, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Bar-breasted Firefinch, Red-winged Gray Warbler, Spotted Morning-Thrush, Marabou Stork, Silverbird, Beautiful Sunbird, Black-headed Gonolek, Speckle-fronted and Golden-backed Weavers, White-rumped Seedeater, Pel's Fishing Owl, White-crested Turaco, Bruce's Green-Pigeon, Chestnut-crowned and White-browed Sparrow-Weavers, Northern Carmine Bee-eater, White-rumped Canary, and more.

Our evening game drive will give us a chance of finding hyenas, leopards, White-tailed Mongoose, and some bird species like Square-tailed, Long-tailed, Pennant-winged, and Standard-winged Nightjars.

-Overnight: Pakuba Safari Lodge

August 29: Drive to Masindi with Birding Along the Way

After breakfast, we shall cross the Nile and drive to Masindi through the escarpment. We'll also pass through a section of Budongo Forest Reserve which is good for species such as the Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Ituri Batis, Puvel's Illadopsis, Lemon-bellied Crombec, White-thighed Hornbill, and so much more.

-Overnight: Masindi Hotel

August 30: Birding in Budongo Forest-Royal Mile

This morning, we will bird to Budongo's famous Royal Mile early in the morning. It is a wide forestry track considered by many to be the country's premier forest birding location. This is the best place in Uganda for Nahan's Francolin, Cassin's Spinetail, and Chestnut-capped Flycatcher.

There are many confusing forest Greenbuls here to test us including Spotted, Xavier's, White-throated, Red-tailed, and Honeyguide Greenbuls. Canopy flocks support Yellow-mantled Weaver, and Uganda Woodland-Warbler. The undergrowth along the track holds numerous skulkers including Scaly-breasted, Brown, and Pale-breasted Illadopses, Fire-crested Alethe, Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat, Rufous Flycatcher-Thrush, Red-tailed Ant-Thrush, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Yellow Longbill, and Gray-throated Tit-Flycatcher. We will keep an eye on any openings in the forest canopy for species such as Cassin's and Crowned Hawk Eagles, Cassin's and Sabine's Spinetails, and White-throated Bee-eaters. The area around the park headquarters is the best site in East Africa for

the elusive canopy dwelling Ituri Batis. We'll continue birding this incredible area throughout the day.
-Overnight: Masindi Hotel

August 31: Transfer to Kibale Forest National Park

After some morning birding, we'll make our way to Kibale Forest National Park which protects a diverse array of primates, from the minuscule, nocturnal Demidoff's Dwarf Galago to our closest living relative, the Chimpanzee. When we arrive at the park in the afternoon, we can choose to go birding along the main road or one of the trails in the forest. We might come across the African Emerald Cuckoo, Purple-headed Starling, Black-billed Turaco, Yellow-billed and Gray-throated Barbets, Blue-throated Roller, Narrow-tailed Starling, Western Black-headed Oriole, and Yellow-throated and Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds.

-Overnight: Chimpanzee Guest House or similar

September 1: Chimp Tracking and Birding

After an early breakfast, we'll drive to the Kibale Forest National Park Visitor Center for a briefing and our chimp tracking excursion. This is a very exciting morning as we track and then watch these incredible primates!

We have a number of great birding options in the afternoon, and we'll determine where to go based on the current weather conditions in addition to latest bird reports. Birding in the afternoon along the main road may be productive. Highlights for the afternoon could include many species that are hard to find elsewhere including Speckle-breasted Woodpecker, Cabanis's and Joyful Greenbul, White-spotted Flufftail, Dusky and Olive Long-tailed Cuckoos, Lesser Honeyguide, Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat, White-chinned Prinia, Gray Apalis, Olive-green Camaroptera, and White-collared Oliveback.

-Overnight: Chimpanzee Guest House or similar

September 2: Kibale to Queen Elizabeth National Park

After breakfast, we'll drive to Queen Elizabeth National Park. This park, which is named after the Queen of England who visited in 1954, is the second largest national park in Uganda. This park boasts the highest biodiversity ratings of any game reserve in the world. This diversity is due to the large variety of habitats, including open savannah, rainforest, dense papyrus swamp, brooding crater lakes, and the vast Lake Edward. Queen Elizabeth National Park has almost 100 mammal species and a remarkable 612 bird species hence making it a superb safari territory, with African Elephants, a profusion of Hippos, the elusive Giant Forest Hog, and the handsome Uganda Kob all regularly sighted around the tourist village on the Mweya Peninsula, which also boasts a marvelous waterfront setting in the shadow of the Rwenzori Mountains.

-Overnight: Enganzi Game Lodge or similar

September 3: Morning Birding/Safari and Afternoon Boat Cruise on the Kazinga Channel

This morning's game drive takes us through a productive area of grassy plains which support large flocks of a variety of stork species including the spectacular Saddle-billed and Woolly-necked Storks. Other species include the Bateleur, Gray Kestrel, Lappet-faced, Ruppell's Griffon, White-backed, and Palm-nut Vultures, African Crane, Black Coucal, Common Button, Harlequin, and Black-rumped Quails, Red-necked Francolin, and Rufous-naped and Flappet Larks. Mammals we will look for include Uganda Kob, African Lion, Common Warthog, Bushbuck, Defassa Waterbuck, Spotted Hyena, African Leopard, and many others.



Kazinga Channel

In the afternoon, we'll board a boat for a tour of the Kazinga Channel, which is a natural magnet for herds of African Elephant, Giant Forest Hog, African Buffalo, Monitor Lizard, African Crocodiles, and the abundant Hippopotamus. Birding here is excellent with great photographic opportunities. We might be blessed with congregations of African Skimmers, Great White and Pink-backed Pelicans, Great and Long-tailed Cormorants, African Openbill, African Skimmer, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Marsh, Wood, and Common Sandpipers, Malachite Kingfisher, African Jacana, Wattled Lapwing, and more.

-Overnight: Enganzi Game Lodge or similar

September 4: Queen Elizabeth National Park to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park

After an early breakfast, we'll drive through the Ishasha section of the park where, if lucky, we may be able to view tree-climbing African Lions. From there, we'll continue to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park. Bwindi is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is home to approximately half of the world endangered population of Mountain Gorillas. This vast reserve offers arguably the most productive montane forest birding in Africa and supports 23 of Uganda's 24 Albertine Rift endemic bird

species. Once part of a much larger forest that included the Virunga Volcanoes in neighboring Rwanda, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is now an ecological island within a sea of human cultivation and therefore of big conservation importance.

Forest birding in Bwindi ranks among the best in Uganda. It is home to 23 highly localized Albertine Rift Endemics. Special birds include Black-faced Rufous-Warbler, Grauer's Warbler, Banded Prinia, Black-throated and Black-faced Apalis, Red-throated Alethe, Yellow-eyed Black-Flycatcher, Ashy Flycatcher, Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Chapin's Flycatcher, Chinspot and Rwenzori Batis, Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Waxbill, Magpie Mannikin, Yellow-crowned Canary, Thick-billed and Streaky Seedeaters, Grauer's and African Broadbills, Shelly's Crimsonwing, Oriole Finch, Mountain Buzzard, Ayre's Hawk-Eagle, Handsome Francolin, Black-billed Turaco, Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo, African Wood-Owl, Rwenzori Nightjar, Scarce Swift, Bar-tailed Trogon, Cinnamon-chested and Black Bee-eaters, Bronze-naped Pigeon, Red-chested Owlet, Tullberg's Woodpecker, Elliot's Woodpecker, Green Tinkerbird, Lagden's Bushshrike, Petit's and Gray Cuckooshrikes, Archer's and White-bellied Robin-Chats, Toro Olive-Greenbul, Ansorge's Greenbul, Equatorial Akalat, White-bellied Robin-Chat, Olive Thrush, Grauer's Swamp and Neumann's Warblers, and Red-faced Woodland-Warbler to mention but a few.

-Overnight: Ride For A Woman Hotel



Mountain Gorillas

September 5: Gorilla Tracking at Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park

After breakfast, for those that have chosen to get a gorilla tracking permit, we'll meet our local guides and porters at the Park Offices for the briefing prior to this incredible adventure. We could come

across the gorillas quickly, or it could take most of the day walking in the wilderness in search of these gentle giants. Gorilla tracking can be a challenging activity; therefore it can be physically taxing. On occasion, the gorillas prove elusive, but often they can be found within an hour by the expert trackers. It is a wonderful experience to stare into the eyes of these gentle giants and watch them in awe as they play and go about their daily activities. Gorilla tracking is indeed a “once in a lifetime” experience that you must not miss. Each encounter with the gorillas is different and has its own rewards, but you are likely to enjoy the close view of adults feeding, grooming, and resting as the youngsters frolic and swing from vines in a delightfully playful display.

For anyone that chooses not to buy a gorilla tracking permit, we will spend the day birding around this incredible national park.

Depending on the length of time it takes to find the gorillas, we will possibly have time for more birding in the afternoon.

-Overnight: Ride For A Woman Hotel

September 6: Birding the Main Trail at Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park

We'll spend another full day birding in the amazing forests of Bwindi. Species we will search for include Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Bar-tailed Trogon, Dusky Tit, Abyssinian Ground-Thrush, White-bellied Robin-Chat, Equatorial Akalat, White-tailed Ant-Thrush, Red-throated Alethe, White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher, Gray-green Bushshrike, Northern Double-collared Sunbird, Black-billed Weaver, and Magpie Mannikin. High exposed perches in the open forest are favored by African Goshawk; the dazzling Black Bee-eater, Blue-throated Roller, Sooty Flycatcher, and forest starlings including Waller's, Stuhlmann's, and Narrow-tailed.

One of Bwindi's star avian attractions is the diminutive, pitta-like Neumann's Warbler, a vocal yet very secretive bird! Other understory birds we hope to see include displaying African Broadbill, Banded Prinia, and the handsome, Black-faced Rufous-Warbler. The midstory and canopy supports Elliot's and Tullberg's Woodpeckers, Cabanis's, Shelley's, and Ansorge's Greenbuls, the strange Grauer's Warbler, and White-browed Crombec. The rare Jameson's Antpecker may also be seen probing under moss on dead branches or gleaning, warbler-like, in the canopy. Overhead, Scarce Swifts forage over the forest. Birding at Buhoma is a truly magical experience. Other wildlife that we may be fortunate enough to find here include the huge Yellow-backed Duiker, Mantled Guereza, L'Hoest's, Blue, and Red-tailed Monkeys; Chimpanzee and several species of squirrels including Fire-footed Rope, Carruthers' Mountain, Ruwenzori Sun and Red-legged Sun Squirrel.

-Overnight: Ride For A Woman Hotel

September 7: Bwindi to Lake Mburo National Park

Lake Mburo National Park is a gem of a park. Though the park is just 370 sq km in size, its landscapes are varied and even a short drive is alive with interest and color.

This is the only park in Uganda that contains Impala and the only one in the rift region to host Plains Zebra and Eland. In Uganda, Topi are only found in Lake Mburo and Queen Elizabeth National Parks. Common wildlife species include Common Warthog, African Buffalo, Oribi, and Defassa Waterbuck.



Plains (Burchell's) Zebra

Common, conspicuous birds we'll encounter on our journey to Lake Mburo include Crested Francolin, Emerald Spotted Wood-Dove, Brown Parrot, Bare-faced Go-away-bird, Blue-naped Mousebird, Lilac-breasted Roller, Green Woodhoopoe, Common Scimitarbill, African Gray Hornbill, Spot-flanked Barbet, Nubian Woodpecker, Trilling Cisticola, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Northern Black Tit, Chin-spot Batis, Greater Blue-eared Starling, and Marico Sunbird. The woodland in the immediate vicinity of Rwonyo also supports many of these widespread species.

-Overnight: Rwakobo Rock Lodge

September 8: Boat Ride in Lake Mburo National Park

After breakfast, we'll take a game drive in the park looking for mammals including Plains Zebra, Impala, Eland, Topi, and African Buffalo. We shall also look out for birds like Trilling and Tabora Cisticolas, Crested, Spot-flanked, Black-collared, and Red-faced Barbets. In the afternoon, we will have a boat trip looking for bird specialties and other mammals in the park, especially the rare African Finfoot. Other highlights could include Giant, Pied, and Shining-blue Kingfishers and Black-crowned and White-backed Night-Herons among many other species.

-Overnight: Rwakobo Rock Lodge

September 9: Lake Mburo to Entebbe for Departure

After an early breakfast, we'll drive out of the park and take another game drive in search of some

species we may have missed the previous day. We'll make a stop at the equator for photographs and continue to Entebbe where we will end our tour at the airport for evening flights home.



Gray-crowned Crane



Murchison Falls

Trip Details:

Cost:

Price per person (double occupancy), from Entebbe, Uganda: \$8,999

Single Supplement: \$1,000

Minimum Participants: 6

Maximum Participants: 10

Price Includes:

Expert Guides

Ground Transportation in Uganda

All Lodging

All Meals

Park Entrance Fees

Rhino and Chimpanzee Tracking Permits

Price Does Not Include:

Airfare to and from Entebbe, Uganda

Visa and Passport Fees

Alcoholic Beverages and Sodas

Personal Items

Tips

Travel Insurance

*Gorilla Tracking Permit

Deposit:

A deposit of \$500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (May 27, 2026).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact us at info@sabrewingnaturetours.com, by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at sabrewingnaturetours.com.

***Gorilla Tracking Permit Info/Disclosure:** The Gorilla Tracking Permit is not included in the base price of this tour. This challenging but unforgettable experience is optional, and we encourage each participant to decide if it's right for them. The hike can be physically demanding and takes place in rugged terrain.

The current cost of the permit is \$800, set by the Uganda Wildlife Authority. If you'd like to join the gorilla tracking excursion, please select this add-on and the permit fee will be included in your total balance.

Important Note: The permit price is subject to change at any time by Ugandan authorities. If the cost increases before your final payment is due, the additional amount will be added to your final invoice.

Responsibility/Disclaimer Statement:

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