

# Mwinilunga Extension

June 1 – 7, 2020

7 days / 6 nights

**\$2980**

Single supplement \$350



## Overview

North-western Zambia must rate as one of the most exciting birding destinations in all of Southern Africa, totally under-birded and with many areas begging to be explored. Mwinilunga, in particular, has been a draw card for intrepid birders for many years. Sandwiched between Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Mwinilunga district is home to numerous species that are found nowhere else in Zambia and are very difficult to find in other countries.

Take the dapper Grimwood's Longclaw – this species also occurs in the DRC and Angola, but both of these countries are difficult to travel in and, even though we offer tours to Angola, these tours do not cover any areas where Grimwood's Longclaw is found. In fact, one often finds three species of Longclaw side by side here, (Grimwood's, Fulleborn's and Rosy-throated), in the same area where we will also find Black-and-Rufous Swallow, Locust Finch, Blue Quail, White-cheeked Bee-eaters, and numerous Cisticolas. A variety of habitats will ensure an endless supply of new and unique birds. It was on one of our trips to Mwinilunga that we discovered Zambia's very first record of Vermiculated Fishing Owl along the West Lunga River, a range extension of around 500 km further south than its known distribution. Other rewarding sites include the source of the mighty Zambezi River, the Zambezi Rapids, Mutanda Falls and Chimfunzi Wildlife Orphanage.

Please note that the itinerary is subject to availability and no reservations have been made yet. Availability will determine the final itinerary and the costs will be adjusted accordingly. Prices are subject to foreign exchange fluctuations.

## **DETAILED ITINERARY**

### **Day 1 - 01 June - Chingola**

We leave Lusaka very early and will either have a packed breakfast or stop en route. There are some patches of good woodland along the way, and we might very well rack up a pretty impressive raptor list by the end of the day. A short stop in Ndola for lunch and then onward to Chingola, our base for our visit to Chimfunshi in the late afternoon.

**O/N Hibiscus Guest House or similar (BLD)**

### **Day 2 - 02 June - Mwinilunga**

Early morning birding at Chimfunshi, where there is a host of Miombo targets for us, most importantly the elusive Sharp-tailed Starling. Other possibilities include Laura's Woodland Warbler, Brown-headed Apalis, Pale-billed Hornbill, Whyte's Barbet, Miombo Scrub-Robin, Bohm's Flycatcher and Chestnut-mantled Sparrow-Weaver. From Chimfunshi we have a long drive to Mwinilunga with limited birding along the way. We might get to Mwinilunga in time for some late afternoon birding at our lodge, which is situated on the outskirts of town but in a pristine setting on the banks of the West Lunga River. We often see the stunning Ross's Turaco here, as well as several other good species.

**O/N Kwakuwahi Lodge, Mwinilunga (BLD)**

### **Day 3 - 03 June Chituna Plain to Mwinilunga**

Our first stop will be at Chituna Plain where we will look for Grimwood's, Rosy-throated and Fulleborn's Longclaws, Wing-snapping Cisticola, and Locust Finch as well as Angola Lark and Black-and-Rufous Swallow. We will also search for Bocage's Weaver and Dambo Cisticola along the stream. In the afternoon we'll visit the Source of the Zambezi, the area where the mighty Zambezi starts from humble beginnings. The surrounding Mushitu (the local name for riverine forest) is host to Grey-winged Robin-Chat, Buff-throated Apalis and Fraser's Rufous Thrush. We head a bit further north to the Zambezi rapids where we hope to find Forbes's Plover. From here we head back to camp with the possibility of Bohm's Spinetail en-route.

**O/N Cassin's Tented Camp (BLD)**

### **Day 4 - 04 June Mwinilunga**

We'll work the grounds around Cassin's Camp in the morning, hoping for Shining-blue Kingfisher, Blue Malkoha and the handsome Afep Pigeon on the West Lunga River. Then we'll search for Blue Quail (was seen in camp on our last trip), Western Least Honeyguide, Splendid Glossy Starling, Brown-headed Apalis, Green Twinspot and Olive Woodpecker in an adjacent Mushitu forest and Black-collared Bulbul, Black-and-Rufous Swallow, Fawn-breasted Waxbill, Marsh Widowbird, Whistling-, Stout- and Dambo Cisticolas in the large dambos (a shallow, grassy drainage line). Later in the day we'll be looking for some of the regular Miombo targets we might still need in addition to some spectacular new possibilities such as Yellow-breasted Hylia, Green-backed Honeybird, Bates's Sunbird, Pallid Honeyguide, Anchieta's Barbet, Pale Wren-Warbler, Orange-winged Pytilia and the handsome *gephyra* race of Red-capped Crombec. The mushitu forests here will give us access to Bamboo Warbler, Bannerman's Sunbird, Margaret's Batis, Narina Trogon, Ross's Turaco, Little Greenbul, Grey Waxbill and Western Bronze-naped Pigeon.

**O/N Cassin's Tented Camp (BLD)**

### **Day 5 - 05 June - Mwinilunga**

Another full day around Cassin's will give us time to explore a bit further afield, and we might decide to visit a recently discovered group of Mushitus (Kalwelwa Forests) to the east of camp. Some super exciting species were found here on our initial exploration; all three Longclaws are present on the dambos here, as well as Compact Weaver. The Mushitus host Spotted Thrush-Babbler, Brown-eared Woodpecker, Bates's Sunbird and many more. It must be noted, though, that birding Kalwelwa is quite tough with very few tracks into the forest, and the area can also be quite wet. At dusk we'll drive to a dambo not far from camp for Swamp Nightjar.

#### **O/N Cassin's Tented Camp (BLD)**

### **Day 6 - 06 June Mutanda Falls**

A fair drive awaits us as we make our way to Mutanda Falls but with no real rush; we'll take our time and bird as we go. The bridge over the Mutanda River is a good spot for Red-throated Cliff Swallow and Bamboo Warbler has also been recorded from here. The lodge grounds hold quite a selection of species, including some birds of special interest: Bocage's Akalat, Spotted Creeper, Ross's Turaco, White-chinned Prinia and Souza's Shrike.

#### **O/N Mutanda Falls Lodge (BLD)**

### **Day 7 - 07 June - Departure**

Some further birding around the lodge before breakfast with departure to Ndola for a flight back to Johannesburg shortly after.

#### **INCLUDES**

- All Transportation in country
- All accommodation as per the itinerary
- All meals
- Full-time guide/ tour leader
- Bottled water
- All entrance fees

#### **EXCLUDES**

- Items of a personal nature
- Any drinks besides bottled water
- All optional activities
- All Flights, Airport Taxes & Visa Costs
- Travel and/or personal Insurance
- Telephone calls
- Laundry
- Gratuities

#### **IMPORTANT NOTE**

We may be forced to change or alter the itinerary at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.