



**TANZANIA BIRDING SAFARI: SAVANNA BIRDS, WILDEBEEST
MIGRATION, AND EASTERN ARC MOUNTAIN ENDEMIC**

**09 - 28 APRIL 2025
09 - 28 APRIL 2026**



Yellow-collared Lovebird is an incredibly striking Tanzanian endemic.

Tanzania surely comes closer to what people expect of Africa than any other country; the vast plains of the Serengeti National Park, the Ngorongoro Crater, and Africa's highest mountain (Kilimanjaro) epitomize the continent. Our Tanzania birding tour allows one to see the wildebeest migration, big cats, an abundance of birds (East Africa is the easiest place on the continent to amass a huge bird list), and then a suite of Tanzanian endemics that lurk in the Eastern Arc Mountains and on Pemba Island (a more idyllic version of Zanzibar). Tanzania has lots of endemics and is one of Africa's greatest wildlife havens, boasting varied and spectacular scenery.

We start our Tanzanian birding safari in the famous (for wildlife) northern parts of the country near the Kenyan border. After arriving at Kilimanjaro International Airport, we head for Arusha on a journey that (weather-permitting) will give us good views of Africa's highest mountain. We spend a good amount of time in the great parks such as the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater, finding not only the great herds and accompanying predators, but also localized lovebird species, **Grey-crested Helmetshrike** and other Kenya/Tanzania endemics, along with birds like **Grey-breasted Spurfowl** that inexplicably don't cross into similar habitat on the Kenyan side. Birdlife absolutely abounds, and we also find a lot of more widespread African species. We then head southeastward from mountain range to mountain range, looking for afro-montane forest endemics (many of them Tanzanian endemics).

Eventually this epic Tanzania birding tour ends at the tropical Indian Ocean city of Dar es Salaam, from where there is the option of joining a short extension to Pemba Island for its four endemics and/or a "rough" extension to some of the more remote Eastern Arc Mountains for endemics we won't see on the main tour. Please email us if you are interested in either or both of these extensions.



Rufous-tailed Weaver – a highly range-restricted East African endemic.

Itinerary (20 days/19 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Arusha

Our first day will be reserved for your arrival, and you may arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport in Arusha at any time, as we have no fixed birding plans for the day. Once at the lodge, we will likely stroll around the grounds, which are often quite productive. We may see **African Black Duck**, **Silvery-cheeked Hornbill**, **White-eared** and **Brown-breasted Barbets**, **Black-throated Wattle-eye**, **Grey-olive Greenbul**, **Kenrick's Starling**, **Rüppell's Robin-Chat**, **Mountain Wagtail** and the range-restricted **Taveta Weaver**.

Overnight: Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, or similar, Arusha



*The glamorous **Purple Grenadier** is delightfully common on this tour.*

Day 2. Birding around Lake Manyara and transfer to Karatu

After enjoying a leisurely breakfast, we plan to make our way towards Lake Manyara National Park, aiming to arrive at the park in the late morning. We can expect to get our lists off to a solid start, adding a variety of exciting species as we bird the diverse assemblage of habitats in the park. We will squeeze in a picnic lunch today, between our time spent birding the forests and open woodlands. Forested areas in the park may yield **Narina Trogon**, **Grey Cuckooshrike**, **Mountain Wagtail**, **Crowned Hornbill** and the huge **Silvery-cheeked Hornbill**. The open woodlands should produce a different suite of birds, including **Spotted Palm Thrush**, **Red-and-yellow Barbet**, **White-bellied Tit**, **Banded Parisoma**, **Rufous Chatterer**, **Rufous-tailed Weaver**, **Steel-blue** and **Straw-tailed Whydahs** and **Purple Grenadier**. Birds of prey are usually well

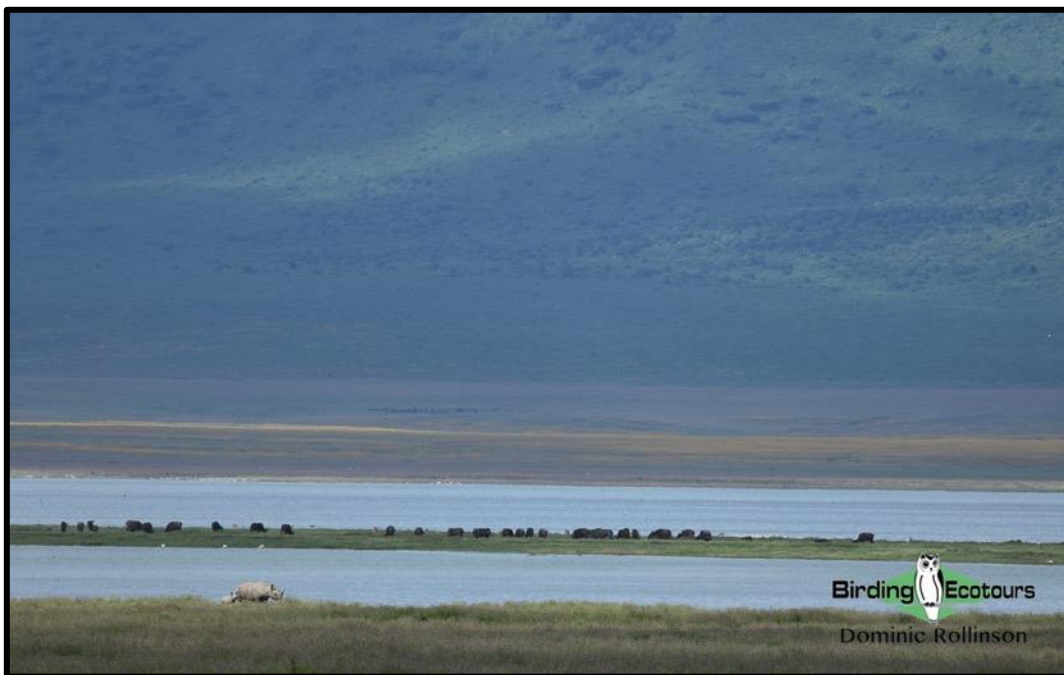
represented in the park, and we will look out for **Lappet-faced** and **White-backed Vultures**, **Bateleur**, **Crowned Eagle**, **African Hawk-Eagle**, **African Goshawk**, **Verreaux's Eagle-Owl** and the adorable **Pearl-spotted Owllet**.

If conditions are favorable, we will visit the park's shallow alkaline lake, where flocks of **Greater** and **Lesser Flamingos** should be in attendance, accompanied by **Great White Pelican**, the aptly named **Goliath Heron**, and various other waterbirds. After what promises to be an exciting first full day out, we will move on toward Karatu, where our comfortable lodge lies on the outskirts of town. We will settle into what will be our base for the next three nights.

Overnight: Karatu

Day 3. Exploring the Ngorongoro Crater

We will dedicate the entire day to exploring the Ngorongoro Crater and the surrounding rim, which is sure to be one of the highlights of the trip. As we descend the slopes toward the crater floor, we stand a fair chance of connecting with **Lions** and, of course, their prey, large herbivores. There are thousands of large mammals in this neatly intact caldera, including **Black Rhinoceros** and **Hippopotamus**, the latter of which can be seen in the water body in the crater's center. Although we would consider ourselves lucky to encounter any of the smaller predators, we may see **Serval**, **Bat-eared Fox**, and **African Golden Wolf**, a species once thought to be closely related to the Eurasian Golden Jackal but now considered a closer relative of the Grey Wolf.



*We hope to encounter **Black Rhinoceros** in the spectacular Ngorongoro Crater.*

As expected, despite stopping for other wildlife, our primary focus will be the birds. We hope to add a large number of new species, including **Lesser Flamingo**, **Grey Crowned Crane**, **Abdim's Stork**, **Black-bellied** and **Kori Bustards**, **Pectoral-patch Cisticola**, **Rufous-tailed Weaver**, **Rosy-throated Longclaw** and many more.

The combination of breathtaking scenery, herds of large African mammals, and exceptional avian diversity make this one of the world's most spectacular wildlife experiences. The crater's rim towers 2,000 feet (600 meters) above the plains in the center, spanning a diameter of 15 miles (24 kilometers). We will work forest patches along the rim for **Golden-winged Sunbird**, **Brown-headed Apalis**, and the unique **Oriole Finch**, in addition to **Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon**, **Dusky Turtle Dove**, **Grey-capped Warbler**, **Eastern Double-collared Sunbird**, **White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher**, **Brown-backed Woodpecker**, **Mbulu White-eye** and **Thick-billed Seed eater**.

Overnight: Karatu



Eastern Double-collared Sunbird is often seen in forest clearings.

Day 4. Forest birding along the Ngorongoro Crater rim

Our plan for today is to bird the Endoro section of the Ngorongoro Conservation area before visiting the delightful Gibb's Farm for lunch and a few additional targets. We will walk along the Elephant Caves Trail, which presents opportunities for excellent forest birding. Some of the species we may encounter here include the likes of **Narina Trogon**, **Moustached Tinkerbird**, **Pallid** and **Scaly-throated Honeyguides**, **African Broadbill**, **Purple-throated Cuckooshrike**, **Black-fronted Bushshrike**, **Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher**, **Brown-headed Apalis**, **Grey-**

capped Warbler, **Black-headed Mountain Greenbul**, **Brown Woodland Warbler**, **African Hill Babbler**, **Mbulu White-eye**, **Grey-headed Nigrita** and **Red-throated Twinspot**. Raptors such as **Ayres's Hawk-Eagle**, **Black Sparrowhawk** and **Augur Buzzard** are worth watching out for and are often joined by **Nyanza Swift** overhead. The raucous calls of **Schalow's Turacos** may lead us to sightings of these gorgeous birds.

After birding the trail, we will head over to Gibb's Farm, a birdy establishment with a tranquil atmosphere. We will have lunch here before setting out to bird the property where species like **Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater**, **Dusky Turtle Dove**, **White-tailed Blue Flycatcher**, **White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher**, **Green-headed Sunbird**, **Holub's Golden Weaver**, **Black-and-white Mannikin**, **Southern Citril** and **Yellow-bellied Waxbill** await us.

Overnight: Karatu



*We stand a good chance of seeing **Lion** in the Serengeti.*

Days 5-6. Serengeti: wildebeest herds, predators and savanna birding

We set off for the iconic Serengeti National Park this morning. This journey will likely be an unforgettable day for all participants, particularly those who have never been to Africa, as we will surely encounter an abundance of charismatic mammals like **African Elephant** and **African Buffalo**, in addition to a spectacular diversity of birds. Once in the Serengeti, we will experience the mind-blowing wildebeest migration, along with vast numbers of **Plains Zebras** and **Thomson's Gazelles**. Other mammals we will be on the lookout for include **Topi**, **Common Eland**, **Grant's Gazelle**, **Bohor Reedbuck** and **Masai Giraffe**. With the sheer abundance of prey here, it is no surprise that the Serengeti is one of the best places in the world to see predators. We

stand a good chance of finding **Lion, Leopard and Cheetah**, and if we are lucky, we will find some of the smaller predators like **Serval and Caracal**. Vultures congregate around kills, and a number of species occur in the park, such as **Rüppell's, White-backed, Lappet-faced, White-headed and Hooded Vultures**.

Several raptor species occur here, including the colorful **Bateleur** and stately **Secretarybird**, the latter of which can be seen roaming the plains in search of their favored prey – snakes. These plains are also home to **Common Ostriches**; we shouldn't have any trouble picking out these giant birds. Smaller birds are also abundant, many boasting striking plumages, such as **Little Bee-eater, Purple Grenadier, Lilac-breasted Roller, Hildebrandt's Starling and Beautiful Sunbird**, among many others. Other plains targets and savanna birds include **White-bellied Bustard, Coqui Francolin, Temminck's Courser, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Pygmy Falcon and Pangani Longclaw**.

Interestingly, we have a few range-restricted targets during our time in the Serengeti, one of which is the **Maasai Apalis**, a specialist of whistling-thorn thickets. This species only occurs here and extends marginally into neighboring Kenya. Other localized species include **Red-throated Tit, Fischer's Lovebird, Grey-crested Helmetshrike and Rufous-tailed Weaver**, and we plan to invest a fair amount of time in finding these species. Additionally, we will search for two Tanzanian endemics here, **Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill** and **Grey-breasted Spurfowl**. We will also have another chance to see the impressive **Kori Bustard** on the Serengeti plains.

Overnight: Serengeti



One of our endemic targets – Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill.

Day 7. Transfer from Serengeti to Tarangire National Park

After two wonderful days in the Serengeti, we will make our way back through the herds and onwards to our next destination – Tarangire National Park. We plan to leave after breakfast and will be sure to target any species that have eluded us on the way out and savor some final views of migrating wildebeest, zebra, and gazelle.



Black-faced Sandgrouse is a regular feature in Tarangire National Park.

The drive to Tarangire National Park will take up most of the remaining day; however, upon arrival in this most breathtaking park, the long drive becomes all the more worth it. Elephants covered in the red soils of the park stroll among baobabs and savanna-clad hills while wild rivers intersect the park. It's the type of place that leaves you in no doubt that you're in Africa. Our main targets here will include localized and endemic species like **Yellow-collared Lovebird**, the unassuming **Ashy Starling** and the characterful **Northern Pied Babbler**, all of which we usually manage to find. We will work the Acacia woodlands for **Von der Decken's** and **Northern Red-billed Hornbills**, **Yellow-necked** and **Red-necked Spurfowl**, **Black-faced Sandgrouse**, **Bearded Woodpecker**, **Abyssinian Scimitarbill**, **Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird** and many more! Bustards feature well here, and we may see **White-bellied**, **Hartlaub's**, and **Buff-crested Bustards**, along with other larger terrestrial species like **Southern Ground Hornbill** and **Common Ostrich**. Good rains in the area often produce an influx of seasonal wetland specials like **Black Coucal** and **Dwarf Bittern**. At the same time, giant baobabs are frequented by nesting **Mottled Spinetails**, which construct their nests in these unique-looking trees.

We will search for waterbirds, including **White-faced Whistling Duck**, **Knob-billed Duck**, **Saddle-billed Stork**, **Hamerkop** and **Grey Crowned Crane** along the Tarangire River.

Overnight: Tarangire National Park

Day 8. Full day in Tarangire National Park

This will be our final day in Tarangire National Park, and as usual, we will search for any species that we have not yet connected with. We are likely to be distracted along the way by the excellent wildlife-watching opportunities in Tarangire and plan to end our day enjoying a sundowner while overlooking the Tarangire River from the lodge's balcony. Brazen **Ashy Starlings** may harass us for any morsels, and **African Scops Owls** will serenade us at dusk.

Although not included in the tour price, Tarangire offers exciting night drives, and you will have an opportunity tonight to join one of these excursions. Nocturnal species that may be encountered include **Verreaux's Eagle-Owl**, **Southern White-faced Owl**, **Bronze-winged** and **Three-banded Coursers**, **East African Springhare**, **Northern Lesser Galago** and **African Savanna Hare**.

Overnight: Tarangire National Park



Ashy Starlings are endemic to Tanzania and are abundant in Tarangire National Park.

Day 9. Tarangire National Park and transfer to Lark Plains

We return to Arusha this morning, where we will dedicate the afternoon to birding the Lark Plains. This area is home to several lark species, perhaps the main target being the rare and super localized

Beesley's Lark (estimated at less than 200 individuals). In addition to this global mega, we stand a good chance of connecting with **Fawn-colored, Short-tailed, Athi Short-toed, and Rufous-naped Larks**, as well as **Fischer's Sparrow-Lark**. It's not all about larks, though, and other notable species here include **Kori Bustard, Eastern Chanting Goshawk, Greater Kestrel, Temminck's and Double-banded Coursers, Yellow-throated and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Abyssinian and Capped Wheatears, Taita Fiscal** and many others. We may enjoy distant views of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, if the weather is favorable.



*The unusual **Short-tailed Lark** will be one of many lark targets on the aptly named Lark Plains.*

We are also likely to get additional views of many of the savanna species we encountered earlier in the Serengeti. **Red-throated Tit** is on the cards again here, as are some stunning barbets. While birding here, we also expect to see our first mousebirds: **Speckled and Blue-naped Mousebirds** are regular, with **White-headed Mousebird** only occasionally seen. **Nubian Woodpecker**, a widespread East African species, occurs here, as does the colonial **Grey-capped Social Weaver**. The woodland sections may further produce **Mouse-colored Penduline Tit, Red-fronted Prinia, Grey Wren-Warbler, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Spotted Palm Thrush, Beautiful Sunbird, Pale White-eye, Kenya Sparrow, Black-faced Waxbill** and **Southern Grosbeak-Canary**. We then return to Arusha after a rewarding session in the Lark Plains.

Overnight: Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, or similar, Arusha

Day 10. South Pare – start of our Eastern Arc birding

Today we leave the north to seek a plethora of Tanzanian bird endemics of the beautiful (and off-the-beaten-track) Eastern Arc Mountains further south, starting with a drive to the South Pare Mountains. En route we'll bird a site that allows us to find several arid-area Kenyan birds that marginally cross the border into Tanzania – these are Tsavo-type birds not often shown on the distribution maps for Tanzania! We'll also start looking for endemics such as **Usambara Thrush** and **Usambara Double-collared Sunbird**.

Overnight: South Pare Mountains

Days 11 – 12. The next range: birding the West Usambara Mountains

We traverse some arid areas containing widespread African birds such as the beautiful **Lilac-breasted Roller** and a lot of others. Rocky slopes will be explored for **Mocking Cliff Chat** and **Striped Pipit**. The real targets are, however, the mountain-forest endemics once we reach our next destination, which will hopefully include **Usambara Weaver**, **Usambara Akalat**, and **Spot-throat**, among many others. **Hartlaub's Turaco**, even more spectacular than many of the other turaco species and a classic East African mountain endemic, will hopefully be found without too many problems. The gorgeous **Black-fronted Bushshrike** with its strange calls, **Cinnamon Bracken Warbler**, **Evergreen Forest Warbler**, and **African Wood Owl** are also often encountered here.

Overnight: West Usambaras



*We hope to find the localized **Green-headed Oriole** in the Usambara Mountains.*

Days 13 – 14. Birding in the East Usambara Mountains

We continue looking for Eastern Arc forest endemics, including **Long-billed Forest Warbler**, **Sharpe's Akalat**, **Banded Green Sunbird**, **Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird**, **Usambara Hyliota**, **Dapple-throat**, **Tanzanian Illadopsis**, **Fraser's Eagle-Owl**, **Montane Nightjar** (another unique subspecies that could be split), and a lot of others. A few of these species are highly enigmatic, and some require immense luck. Pairs of **Fischer's Turaco** are not too difficult to find, and **Green-headed Oriole** gives its presence away with its liquid calls emanating from the canopy.

Overnight: Amani

Day 15. Miombo woodland birding

Miombo (*Brachystegia*) woodland is a beautiful dry forest that boasts a lot of south-central-African endemics, extending from southern Tanzania to Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Angola (see our [blog on miombo birding](#)). Since we'll be in a completely new, very unique habitat, we're bound to add a lot of new birds to our burgeoning list. Mikumi National Park is where we search for miombo-woodland birds – and we must be careful, as there are stacks of big game (some pretty dangerous) around. **Racket-tailed Roller** sits quietly on more concealed perches in thicker woodland than other rollers. **Shelley's Sunbird** and various other more widespread sunbird species might be around. **Miombo Rock Thrush** sings beautifully from under the canopy. **Pale-billed Hornbill**, **Böhm's Bee-eater**, **Dickinson's Kestrel**, and a bunch of other brilliant birds will also be searched for.



A Böhm's Bee-eater seen in miombo-type woodlands.

Leaving the national park and heading to our accommodation, we'll stop if we see **Black-winged Red Bishop** (Fire-crowned Bishop being an alternate, nicely descriptive name for this species, which does look like it's on fire), the stunning little **Half-collared Kingfisher**, a vulture that rarely eats meat, **Palm-nut Vulture**, and stacks more.

Overnight: Mikumi

Days 16 – 17. Sampling the vast Udzungwa Mountains

While the Udzungwa Mountain National Park warrants a mini-expedition to see some of the best endemics, such as Udzungwa Forest Partridge and Rufous-winged Sunbird (we can arrange this as part of the remote extension – please ask us), the more remote parts of the park are beyond the scope of the main tour. Instead, we focus on other quality birds, such as the brilliant **Livingstone's Flycatcher**, **Green Malkoha**, **Lesser Seedcracker**, **Green Barbet**, and many other south-east-African birds.

Overnight: Udzungwa Mountains



Kilombero Weaver is one of a few recently described bird species from Tanzania's Kilombero Valley.

Day 18. Undescribed species of the Kilombero Valley Floodplain

Today involves a lot of driving on a rough road, but it's worth it, as the Kilombero Valley Floodplain is 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 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**, etc. The beautifully colored **Orange-breasted Waxbill** can sometimes put in an appearance. The floodplain is heavily used by people for fishing and cattle-grazing, so it's quite a scene to behold.

Overnight: Mikumi

Day 19. Transfer to Dar es Salaam

We start the day by trying to clean up on the mountain birds before heading gradually to the tropical East African city of Dar es Salaam on the warm Indian Ocean. Here we'll look for terns, shorebirds, and other species.

Overnight: Dar es Salaam

Day 20. Coastal birds and departure

We'll bird until we take our flights for home or to one of the extensions.

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:	20 days
Limit:	4 - 8
Dates:	09 – 28 April 2025 09 – 28 April 2026
Start:	Kilimanjaro International Airport near Arusha (the order of the tour is sometimes reversed. Please check with us before buying air tickets.)
End:	Dar es Salaam
Prices:	US\$12,629 per person sharing, assuming 4 – 8 participants (2025) US\$13,995 per person sharing, assuming 4 – 8 participants (2026)
Single supplements:	US\$1,090 (2025) US\$1,210 (2026)
Pemba Island:	On request
Southern Highlands:	On request

Price includes:

Accommodation as specified
All meals
All park, conservation, and entrance fees as described
Excursions and activities as detailed in itinerary
Ground transport

Price excludes:

Flights
Airport taxes
Items of a personal nature, e.g., laundry, gifts, etc.
Drinks
Visa
Insurance
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))