



## MALAWI May 8 – 25, 2024

### Day 1 -- Arrivals and transfers to Lodge

Arrive in Lilongwe, where you will be met by a guide or driver and transferred to Kumbali Country Lodge, a private lodge situated on a 650-hectare forest reserve and dairy farm.

#### **Kumbali Country Lodge\***

**Capital Hill Dairy Farm, Plot 9 & 11, Area 44**

**Lilongwe 3, Malawi**

**011+265+999+963 402**

### Days 2 and 3: Dzalanyama Forest Reserve

After stocking up on supplies, we will tackle the rather poor road to Dzalanyama, a great birding spot near the Mozambique border. We will spend three nights in a rustic forest lodge, which is set in a woodland overlooking a small stream. The focus will be on some of the more important birds of the Dzalanyama Miombo *Brachystegia* woodlands and its mixed foraging flocks that include some real beauties. Target species include **Boulder Chat** at the northern limits of its distribution, the seldom-seen but possible **Lesser Seedcracker**, **Olive-headed Weaver**, **Stierling's Woodpecker** (near endemic) and **Reichard's Seed-eater**. Other birds present include **Pale-billed Hornbill**, **Schalow's Turaco**, **Whyte's Barbet**, **Miombo Barbet** (scarce), **Souza's Shrike**, **African Spotted Creeper**, **Red-capped Crombec**, **Miombo Tit**, **Chapin's Apalis**, **Miombo Scrub-Robin**, **Miombo Rock-Thrush**, **Bohm's Flycatcher**, the highly active and beautiful **White-tailed Blue Flycatcher**, **Black-eared Seedeater**, and **Anchieta's, Miombo**, and **Shelley's Sunbirds**. Towards the evening **African Barred Owlet** and **African Wood Owl** are possible, as is the spectacular **Pennant-winged Nightjar**.

#### **Dzalanyama Forest Lodge**

**c/o Land & Lakes Safari**

**Lilongwe, Malawi**

**011+265+1+757 120**

### Day 4: South Viphya Plateau

Early morning departure for the rather long drive north with a stop at Kazungu Lake for **Lesser Jacana** and other water birds. From here we proceed to the South Viphya Mountains where we will have a chance at birds such as **Red-faced Crimsonwing**, **Orange Ground-**



**Thrush, Black-eared Seedeater, Whyte's Barbet, Sharpe's Greenbul, and Anchieta's Sunbird.** Over our lodge, which is situated at 5000 feet (1650 metres) above sea level and malaria-free, we might see **Red-rumped Swallow** and perhaps **White-headed Saw-wing**. The lodge is set in an area of natural bush and gardens surrounded by forestry areas.

**Luwawa Forest Lodge\***

**Private Bag 43<sup>[SEP]</sup>**

**Mzimba<sup>[SEP]</sup>, Malawi**

**Cell +011+265 +999+512 645**

### **Day 5: South Viphya Plateau to Rumphi**

Early morning birding around Luwawa Forest Lodge for **White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher, Bronzy Sunbird** and **Olive-headed Greenbul**. If we have time we might bird a little stunted miombo woodland where **Whyte's Barbet, Trilling Cisticola, Miombo Blue Starling, Reichard's Seedeater, Orange-winged Pytilia** and **Miombo Rock Thrush** are possibilities. After a hearty breakfast we will head north for the small town of Rumphi where we stay at an orphanage just outside town. The orphanage runs a lodge and restaurant where all proceeds go towards orphanage operations.

**Matunkha Eco-Tourism Safari Lodge\***

**Rumphi, Malawi**

**011+265+888+203 424**

### **Day 6: Rumphi**

We depart Rumphi early with packed lunch and head for Uzumara Forest at 5,100 ft, or 1554 m. Our main target here, and never an easy bird, is **Sharpe's Akalat**. We'll also try for it in Nyika National Park but it's probably even tougher there. **Olive-flanked Robin Chat** is another important find here, but fortunately slightly easier than its aforementioned cousin. Other targets include **Black-lored Cisticola, Chapin's Apalis, Bertram's Weaver** and **Yellow-browed Seedeater**. **Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk** has been seen along the road to the forest in the past.

**Matunkha Eco-Tourism Safari Lodge\***

**Rumphi, Malawi**

**011+265+888+203 424**



### **Day 7: Rumphi to Nyika National Park**

Before heading to Nyika NP where we will stay for three nights, we will spend a full morning at Vwaza Marsh National Game Reserve. This little-visited reserve that lies along the Zambian border west of Rumphi is an area of marsh and plain with a few rocky outcrops. The reserve has a wonderful mix of vegetation: Mopane and Miombo forest and grassland, thin woodland and marsh. Our main targets are **White-winged Babbling Starling** and **Chestnut-mantled Sparrow-Weaver**. Other birds that we might see are **Meyer's Parrot**, **Böhm's Flycatcher**, **Green-backed** and **Bennett's Woodpecker**, **Wood Pipit**, **Arnot's Chat**, and **Rufous-bellied Tit**. Typically the reserve is home to large herds of Cape Buffalo and Elephant, and a large variety of antelope including Roan, Greater Kudu, Lichtenstein's Hartebeest, Eland and Impala.

From the reserve, we head north along a winding gravel track that makes its way through an arid valley before beginning the climb onto the Nyika Plateau. At 6,560 ft (2,000 m), the plateau is one of the coldest places in the country. We will pass through Miombo woodlands on the lower slopes and we then climb through montane grasslands and *Protea* with pockets of forest. We will be on the lookout for a few of the target birds such as the skulking **Striped Flufftail**. **Black-backed Barbets** can sometimes be seen in the afro-montane forest patches. We will also search for both **Chapin's** and **Brown-headed Apalis**, and we'll have another chance at **Black-lored Cisticola**, albeit by this time we should have it under the belt already, allowing us to concentrate on finding **Churring Cisticola**. We may see **Hildebrandt's Francolin** flushing from the roadside. At dusk, **Ruwenzori Nightjar** may be seen flittering in the night sky.

### **Chelinda Camp**

### **Day 8: Nyika National Park**

Nyika is Malawi's largest park and an important water catchment area that extends across the great plateau, which is essentially a granitic dome. Its environment is like none other in the whole of Africa. The name 'Nyika' means "where the water comes from". Today we have a full day in this stunning part of the world. We will bird forest, bracken and grassland and perhaps some Miombo, looking for a variety of range-restricted species. **Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk** is not uncommon and is often seen hunting, even around pine plantations. Again we will search for **Sharpe's Akalat** if we failed to locate it in Uzumara; the same applies to **Olive-flanked Robin-Chat**. **Red-tufted Sunbird** is high on our list of priorities today as is **Yellow-browed Seedeater** and **Bertram's Weaver**. **Buff-shouldered (Montane) Widowbird** shouldn't be too difficult to locate but unfortunately we will have to



be satisfied seeing them in their rather drab non-breeding dress. There are plenty of Zebra, Bushbuck, Reedbuck, Roan antelope and Elephant and you may also spot Eland, Warthog, Klipspringer, Jackal, Duiker and possibly Hyena and Leopard.

**Chelinda Camp**

### **Day 9: Nyika National Park**

Another full day in the park and early morning will see us concentrate on finding the two possible **Flufftail** species here, **Red-chested** and **Striped**. We had great success with the former on our last trip but the latter can be a tough bird at this time of year. We'll also look for both **Red-winged** and **Hildebrandt's Francolins**. **Red-winged** is relatively easy with **Hildebrandt's** being the shyer of the two. The stunning **Blue Swallow** forages over the vast montane grasslands and we hope to see them during our game drives and, as always, we'll be on the lookout for both **Ludwig's Double-collared** and **Forest Double-collared Sunbirds**, both fairly common here. **Orange Ground-Thrush** occurs in the patches of forest alongside **Sharpe's Akalat**, **White-chested Alethe** and **Olive-flanked Robin-Chat**. A night drive should produce **Ruwenzori Nightjar** and, if we are very lucky, perhaps **African Grass Owl**.

**Chelinda Camp**

### **Day 10: Nyika National Park to Misuku Hills**

We will depart very early as we head northwest towards the coffee-producing area known as Misuku Hills, near the remote, dusty, mid-altitude, Malawi-Zambian border town of Chitipa. Depending on the road conditions, we will either exit Nyika NP at the northern gate or use the longer conventional route via Rumphi and then north. We should arrive at our destination in Misuku in the late afternoon.

**Mwalingo Guest House**

**Mzuzu Coffee Cooperative**

**Misuki, Malawi**

**+265 (0) 132 0899**

**+265 (0) 132 0787**

### **Day 11: Misuku Hills**

Misuku Hills encompasses three forest reserves: Mugesse, Wilindi and Matipa, with the latter two often just referred to as Wilindi-Matipa Forest Reserve. These are some of the most stunning forests anywhere in Malawi and hold some species not found further south.

**Dark Batis** in particular is one of our main targets here. Other target species include **Bertram's Weaver**, **Chapin's Apalis** (easier here than anywhere else), **Black-lored**



**Cisticola, Anchieta's Sunbird, Reichard's Seedeater, Sharpe's Greenbul, Olive Woodpecker and Striped Flufftail.**

**Mwalingo Guest House**

**Mzuzu Coffee Cooperative**

**Misuki, Malawi**

**+265 (0) 132 0899**

**+265 (0) 132 0787**

### **Day 12: Misuku to Lake Malawi**

We'll do some early morning birding in the Wilindi-Matipa Forest; birds such as **Red-faced Crimsonwing** are normally easier here and we'll also be on the lookout for any birds we might have missed the previous day, as well as **Striped Pipit** along the way. We depart for Lake Malawi shortly after and, if reports of improved road conditions are anything to go by, we should get down to the lake in decent time. Birding en-route has in the past produced **Magpie Mannikin** at the lake so we'll hope for a repeat.

### **Makuzi Beach Lodge**

**Private Bag 12**

**Chintheche**

**Malawi**

**+265 999 283 980**

**+265 888 774 393**

### **Day 13: Nkhata Bay to South Viphya**

Early morning birding near Nkhata Bay, where we will look for **East Coast Akalat** at arguably the most accessible spot in Malawi for it. Other birds we might see are **Green Malkoa, African Broadbill, Narina Trogon, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Tambourine Dove, and Red-capped Robin-Chat**. After a good birding session we'll head back to the South Viphya Mountains for another night at Luwawa Forest Lodge.

### **Luwawa Forest Lodge\***

**Private Bag 43<sup>[SEP]</sup>**

**Mzimba<sup>[SEP]</sup>, Malawi**

**Cell +011+265 +999+512 645**



#### **Day 14: Mzimba to Liwonde National Park**

Early morning departure for the capitol, Lilongwe, where we will have an early lunch and then waste no further time in getting to the gates of the popular Liwonde NP, hopefully in time for some afternoon birding. Birdlife is exceptionally varied here. The Shire River attracts **African Fish Eagle** and various weavers build their nests in the thin woodland. **Pel's Fishing Owl** is often seen at dusk along the river's edge. Species around our camp, situated on the banks of the Shire, are **Böhm's Bee-eater**, **Collared Palm Thrush**, noisy **Southern Brown-throated Weaver**, **Scarlet-chested** and **White-bellied Sunbids**, **White-browed Robin-Chat**, **Bearded Scrub Robin**, and **Yellow-bellied Greenbul**. Wildlife includes quite large numbers of Elephant, and the river attracts countless Hippo and Crocodile. Antelope include Kudu, Sable and Bushbuck. Predator-wise, there are Leopard and Hyena and the occasional visiting Lion. Black Rhino has been re-introduced.

**Mvuu Camp**

**P.O.Box 489**

**Lilongwe, Malawi**

**011+ 265+1+771 393/153**

#### **Day 15: Liwonde National Park**

Full day birding in Liwonde with emphasis on finding **Bohm's Bee-eater**, **Lilian's Lovebird**, **Reichenow's Woodpecker**, **Cinnamon-breasted Tit** and **Livingstone's Flycatcher**. We'll also be on the lookout for **Bronze-winged Courser**, **Southern White-faced Owl**, **Pel's Fishing Owl**, **Brown-breasted Barbet**, and **Racket-tailed Roller**.

**Mvuu Camp**

**P.O. Box 489**

**Lilongwe, Malawi**

**011+ 265+1+771 393/153**

#### **Day 16: Liwonde National Park to Zomba**

Early morning birding in Liwonde for birds we might still need. After the morning's birding we will head for the Zomba Plateau, a huge granite outcrop rising to over 6,000 ft., or 2000 m. We don't have many targets here but the ones we do have are rather tricky and we'll concentrate our efforts on finding them. We could also keep an eye out for birds such as **Lesser Seedcracker** and **Green Twinspot** that occur here.

**Zomba Forest Lodge**

**+265 (0) 992 802 702**

**+265 (0) 997 593 325**



### **Day 17: Zomba Plateau**

We'll have an early start looking for our targets. First up and probably the most difficult is the endangered **Thyolo or Cholo Alethe**, a bird under a lot of pressure from illegal logging and the subsequent disappearance of its preferred habitat. Another must-find is **White-winged Apalis**, and if we find these two star birds we'll have reason to celebrate. Other birds to look for are the endemic **Yellow-throated Apalis, Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Bar-tailed Trogon, White-eared Barbet, Livingston's Tucaco, Pallid and Scaly-throated Honeyguides, White-starred Robin, Cape Batis, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, African Yellow Warbler, and Red-throated Twinspot** plus an assortment of **Greenbuls**.

#### **Zomba Forest Lodge**

+265 (0) 992 802 702

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### **Day 18: Zomba to Blantyre**

Drive to Blantyre for international flights. Depending on the time of the flights, we might be able to squeeze in some last-minute birding this morning.

**Please note that a fair selection of mammals will also be seen from time to time and we'll make sure not to neglect that part of the tour.**

**Includes - all accommodation, meals, guide fees, excursions, entrance fees, bottled water, transport and fuel**

**Excludes - Visas, International flights, items of a personal nature, gifts and tips.**

#### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

~ Deposit of \$700 is required with registration (registration forms available online).

~ Balance is due 4 months prior to the start date for the tour

~ Checks should be made payable to *Cheepers! Birding on a Budget* and mailed with the registration form to:

**Cheepers! Birding on a Budget**

**Post Office Box 385**

**Spring Valley, OH 45370**



### **CANCELLATION POLICY:**

Cancellation must be made in writing (email or snail mail)

More than 6 months prior to departure – full refund of deposit

Between 4 and 6 months prior to departure – 50% refund of deposit

Less than 4 months prior to departure – No refund of deposit

If cancellation occurs after full payment is made, a refund will be given only if the vacant spot is filled.

### **Trip insurance is recommended.**

You can compare prices offered by various trip insurance companies at these websites:

<http://www.insuremytrip.com>

[http://www.quotewright.com/?sub\\_id=6056](http://www.quotewright.com/?sub_id=6056)

**Cheepers! Birding on a Budget LLC reserves the right to make changes in the itinerary if the need should arise due to unforeseeable circumstances such as weather, landslides, and other natural phenomena, as well as suggestions by local guides in order to take advantage of an unusual birding opportunity. Lodging is subject to change based on availability.**

### **QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!**

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