

Lochinvar National Park

14-17 Sep 2023



Dates: Thursday 14 to Sunday 17 September 2023. You are welcome to join for the full 3 nights, or for only 1 or 2 nights.

Number of people: Flexible.

Package type: Birds & Bush – we will spend all our time in the field, where the focus is on birding and exploring, with ample attention for all wildlife.

Package and accommodation type: Camping safari on self-driving and self-catering basis.

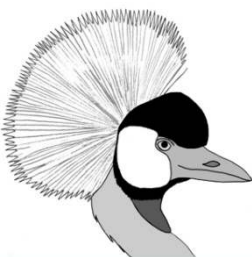
Package price: \$60 pppn.

This includes specialist guiding by Frank Willems and use of general camp setup (toilet & shower, kitchen and dining). Excluded are park fees (k135.50/k57 pppn for resident/citizen including camping the last time we visited, and k25.50 per vehicle per night).

The following are optional: use of kitted tent (\$40 pppn), high-quality catering (\$50 pppn), transport (costs TBC), drinks (on cash bar basis). Prior notice essential.

This special applies to BirdWatch Zambia members only. Non-members pay an additional \$25 with which comes BWZ membership for 2023 and 2024.

For each booking, donation will be made to BirdWatch Zambia and the Kalwelwa Conservancy.



Birding Zambia

Web www.birdingzambia.com - email birdingzambia@gmail.com

Introduction

Lochinvar is part of the Kafue Flats, a million hectares floodplains area, not far short of the size of the Okavango and Bangweulu. It can easily be argued to be Zambia's prime birding site. Against a background of stunning scenery dotted with the endemic Kafue Lechwe, it holds a remarkable diversity in waterbirds, many of which in internationally important congregations. Possibly most notable are the large populations of Grey Crowned and Wattled Crane and (seasonally) African Skimmer and Caspian Plover. It is the only site in Zambia where Black-tailed Godwit, Caspian Tern and Gull-billed Tern are present in numbers while Slaty Egret and Greater Flamingo are regular. The many thousands of migrant waders and terns commonly include vagrants. The adjacent drier shrubs are excellent for warblers including seasonally Olive-tree Warbler (Zambia's only known annual location) while the drier plains hold breeding populations of Secretarybird, Denham's Bustard and (seasonally) large numbers of Yellow-throated Sandgrouse. Among numerous raptors are Montagu's and Pallid Harrier (seasonal), Red-necked Falcon and all vultures (resident). Kafue Lechwe will be seen in good numbers, while Serval and Oribi are among other mammals of interest which may be seen.

Since 2020, Lochinvar has reinforced its status as Zambia's prime rarity spot producing Zambia's first Little Terns (with 1-3 individuals seen during most visits in 2020 and 2021) as well as Lesser Sand, Pacific Golden and Grey Plover, Pectoral and Terek Sandpiper, Curlew, Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit, Cape Teals, Cape Shoveler (suspected to have bred), Baillon's Crake, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-winged Pratincole and Red-rumped Swallow, to name a few.

Mid September is prime migration season for waders. A similarly timed visit in 2021 yielded a wealth of interesting waders and large numbers of plains species such as Yellow-throated Sandgrouse. Access is straight-forward this time of year and visibility of waterbirds optimal in the short shoreline vegetation.

Birding Zambia is proud to be the only operator offering packages to Lochinvar. We will pick a camping site next to the shore of Chunga Lagoon, probably not far from Melindi Tree, which forms the prime birding area. Exact locality depends on water levels and hence birding concentrations. Exact location will be communicated in good time.



Itinerary

Details may vary according to water levels.

Arrival day: you are welcome to arrive any time (from Thursday 14:00 onwards). It takes roughly 5 hours from either Lusaka or Livingstone to the camp site at Chunga Lagoon. See below for directions.

Fri/Sat/Sun: we will focus on the shores of the Chunga Lagoon during the mornings. This is where most waders and other waterbirds concentrate. The sections along the southern parts are most productive, with exact locations of concentrations depending on water levels.

In the afternoons, we might venture further afield into the plains to the northeast, which is a mixture of dry and wet floodplains holding great wader numbers as well as cranes, bustards and Marsh Owl, and the Gwisho and Bwanda Hotsprings area which often is a prime site for cranes, Secretarybird and Yellow-throated Sandgrouse.



Directions & Map

A Google Map search for 'Chunga Rest Camp' will produce the correct route, apart from the turnoff from the T1 when coming from Kafue side – better continue on the T1 for another 13 km.

- Turn off the T1 onto the tarred D365 directly north of Monze, where a sign for Lochinvar NP is present.
- The turn after 24.3 km is clearly signposted, though shade of a tree may cause it to be overlooked; if you get to the end of the tarmac, you have gone too far.
- After 13 km on dirt, you reach the gate for the park which cannot be missed.
- Keep right after 4 km (going straight quickly brings you to the old Lochinvar House and scout houses; turn around)
- Keep going on the track passing the gypsum mine. We will probably camp near Melindi Tree, for which take a left at -15.889155, 27.23689.
- Exact locality of the camp site we choose varies with water levels hence bird concentrations. We will communicate the location once we scout it out prior to your arrival.

