

# Chisamba IBA: barbets, vultures and more

Fri 15 – Sun 17 July 2022



**Start and end:** Chisamba

**Guide:** Frank Willems

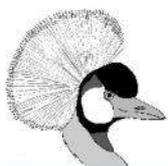
**Package type:** “Birds & Bush” guided safari

*We’re spending as much time as feasible in wild places, where the focus is on birding while exploring, typically with ample attention for other wildlife.*

**Accommodation type:** comfortable chalet at Fringilla Lodge

**Package price:** \$140/\$190 pp for the weekend - sharing/single occupancy. Joining for a day \$25 pp.

*Included are all guiding services and accommodation. Excluded are catering and drinks, which are available on-site, and items of a personal nature. The rate applies to BirdWatch Zambia members only. Non-members pay an additional \$25 with which comes BWZ membership for 2022 and 2023. For each booking, a donation will be made to BirdWatch Zambia and the Mwinilunga Conservation Project.*



## BIRDING ZAMBIA

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## Introduction

The Chisamba area is among Zambia's most birded Important Bird Areas, and for very good reasons. Large farms dominate the landscape, providing not only food for millions of Zambian people, but also offering effective protection for hundreds of bird species. Zambian or Chaplin's Barbet, Zambia's best known endemic which features on the kwacha coin, is the IBA's flagship species. But this is only one cherry on an impressive cake. Almost all of Zambia's raptors can be seen here. White-backed, Hooded and Lappet-faced Vulture all occur in healthy numbers, in contrast to the rapid continental declines which has led to classification as Endangered or Critically Endangered. We hope to find back the Cape Vulture, seen here late

May together with multiple tagged White-backed Vultures from South Africa and Namibia. Crowned Eagle, Martial Eagle and Secretarybird all breed, while a single Verreaux's Eagle was recently found as well. Numerous large dams hold impressive waterbird populations and have yielded endless rarity reports, including recently Greater Flamingo. Intact miombo woodlands and thickets are still extensive, holding specials like Racket-tailed Roller and Crested Guineafowl. Some of the farms also host healthy populations of wild large mammals.

Being only an hour's drive from Lusaka, the area is popular for day trips – such as those organised by BirdWatch Zambia. We believe this weekend nevertheless offers a great opportunity, for both Lusaka-based birders who like to explore the area more thoroughly, as well as for those of us living "further afield".

This weekend is also the half-yearly International Waterbird Count. BirdWatch Zambia traditionally counts Huntley's Farm during this weekend – which will be incorporated into this package.

We will be staying at Fringilla Lodge. This comfortable though very affordable lodge is conveniently situated in the heart of the Chisamba area, at a short distance from several key sites, including Fringilla's own "vulture restaurant".

Your visit will support BirdWatch Zambia – which is active in the area with the Vulture Safe Zones project, Zambian Barbet surveys and education work - as well as the Kalwelwa Conservancy in Mwinilunga, Birding Zambia's own conservation project.



## Itinerary

### Friday 15 July

Suggested arrival is at 14:00 at Fringilla but you are welcome to arrive at your convenience. We will gather for a birdwalk within the premises of Fringilla at 15:30, hoping to find local specials like Collared Palm Thrush and Red-necked Falcon. A main focus will be the vulture restaurant, which often attracts large numbers of Marabou and White-backed Vulture, with the hope of also finding Hooded and Lappet-faced Vulture, and checking for vultures with wingtags – individual marks which allow us to study the movement and survival of these threatened birds. Frank is directly involved in these studies and will share the latest insights.

### Saturday 16 July

The morning will be dedicated to Huntley's Farm. We will carry out the waterbird count, covering all four major dams on the farm, as well as checking on the vultures present here. Expect to see thousands of waterbirds, including large numbers of Marabou, ducks, lapwings and stilts. Notable regulars include African Swamphen, Rufous-bellied Heron, Lesser Jacana and Great White Pelican. Hopefully we will find back some of the rarities recorded here recently - Cape Vulture, Black Stork and African Skimmer – or discover another rarity, which has included Cape Teal and Cape Shoveler during the winter months. Other species of note include Sombre Greenbul, here at the very limit of range, Black-backed Barbet and open land species like Chestnut-backed and Red-capped Lark.

In the afternoon, we will go look for Zambian Barbet along the Chisamba Road, followed by a visit to Sable Farm. Here we will logically focus on the plethora of raptors, with Secretarybird, Crowned Eagle, African Hawk Eagle, Martial Eagle and Fish Eagle among the residents which we are hoping to find. We may get lucky finding back the recently observed Verreaux's Eagle. The farm has much more to offer though, and we will check for Racket-tailed Roller and other miombo birds, as well as waterbirds including Saddle-billed Stork and Goliath Heron. High densities of indigenous African mammals and Ostrich will add even more colour to our visit.



### Sunday 17 July

After an early breakfast, we will head towards Chisamba town. Depending on how Saturday went, we may dedicate more time to the *Zambian Barbets*. Our main focus is the Marula Farm, part of the Chisamba Ranching Company. The farm has an extensive area of thicket, which holds the only population of *Crested Guineafowl* population on the Central-Zambian Plateau. Nearby miombo woodlands hold a wealth of miombo birds including, among much more, *Bushveld Pipit*, *Souza Shrike*, *Rufous-bellied* and *Miombo Tit*, *Miombo Pied Barbet*, *Arnot's Chat*, *Green-backed Woodpecker* and *Pale-billed Hornbill*. We may also come across a good variety of raptors, including several vulture species at the vulture restaurant, and *Martial Eagle*.

From here, we will continue to Triangle Farm. The large dam on the upper Mpongwe River has produced lots of interesting records in recent years, including *Little Ringed Plover* and *Black-winged Pratincole*. We may get lucky finding *Greater Flamingo* and *Wattled Crane*, both of which were present here in May, and are almost certain to find a wealth of other waterbirds.

We expect to exit Triangle around 13:00. You may decide to head home from here, or opt to end the weekend in style with a lunch and some birding at nearby *Chaminuka Game Ranch*.

### Disclaimer

The areas we visit are active farms. Access, which is typically restricted, has been requested by Birding Zambia specifically for this weekend. Obviously, farm operations take priority, and access may be denied without prior notice, in which case Birding Zambia will be forced to adjust the program.

