

Blue Lagoon National Park

Fri 22 – Sun 24 July 2022



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 with ample attention also for other wildlife.

Accommodation type: bush camping

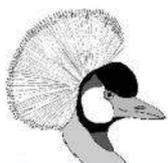
Package price: Package price: \$50 pppn.

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, and k25.50 per vehicle per night).

The following are optional: use of kitted tent (\$50 pppn), catering (\$50 pppn), transport (cost-covering charge, depending on number of people interested), drinks (on cash bar basis). Prior notice essential.

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 to Birding Zambia’s Mwinilunga Conservation Project.



BIRDING ZAMBIA

Web www.birdingzambia.com / email: birdingzambia@gmail.com

Introduction

At less than three hours driving from Lusaka, Blue Lagoon is among Zambia's easier parks to visit. Large herds of the endemic Kafue Lechwe, high densities of Wattled and Grey Crowned Crane and vast waterbird numbers are just some of the attractions of this ecological jewel. Yet few people have explored this park.

Blue Lagoon forms the northern end of the Kafue Flats, one of Africa's great floodplain systems at roughly one million hectares. The northern section of the park is largely covered by acacia woodlands, home to a rich avifauna including many breeding White-backed Vultures. Most of the park however consists of seasonally inundated open plains and swamp, which will form the main focus of our visit. The big herds of Kafue Lechwe and small numbers of Zebra and Buffalo keep the vegetation short. Huge numbers of ducks, herons, ibises, waders and other waterbirds congregate here. Slaty Egret is frequently encountered. A number of species more typical for brackish water is largely limited to the Kafue Flats in Zambia, notably Caspian Tern, Gull-billed Tern and Avocet. The area is also the single area in sub-equatorial Africa where Black-tailed Godwit occurs in numbers, with good numbers of this migratory species staging year-round. Other Palearctic waders may still be found in small numbers, though outnumbered by species which breed locally in the dry season, such as Collared Pratincole and Kittlitz's Plover. Marsh Owl and Swamp Nightjar are among nocturnal species which we expect to find.



We will give it our very best effort to find some rarities, for which the Kafue Flats is arguably the best area in Zambia. In July these may include Cape Vulture (of which an influx seems to be ongoing at time of writing), Greater and Lesser Flamingo, Cape Teal and Cape Shoveler.

Other wildlife which we hope to come across includes Rock Python, for which Blue Lagoon has an excellent reputation, and Serval which occurs in relatively high densities in the Kafue Flats area.

In addition, the timing of this trip is of interest from a conservation perspective. The Kafue Flats may well be at a pivotal moment in time. The area has undeniably had a rocky past, with conflicting interests and insufficient protection leading to neglect and sharp declines in wildlife numbers. Earlier this year, the International Crane Foundation together with WWF signed a co-management agreement with the Zambian government and local communities. Although early days, there is lots of reason for optimism. The restoration of the viewing tower at the end of the causeway in Blue Lagoon stands symbol for change. It is here where we plan to set up camp.



Itinerary

The below description is indicative as all depends on water levels and hence accessibility and distribution of birds and other wildlife.

Friday 22 July

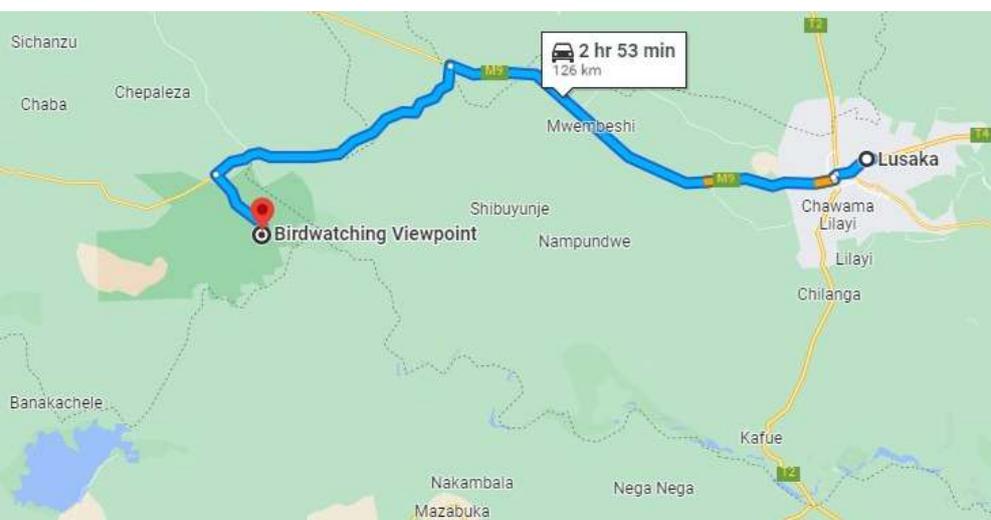
You are welcome to arrive any time of day. We will aim to have the camp up and running by midday on Friday latest. Exact location of the camp will be decided upon last moment, linked to water levels and group size. In the afternoon, we will explore the areas along the causeway.

Saturday 16 July

Full day in Blue Lagoon National Park. We will dedicate a long morning to the floodplains west of the causeway, which holds the highest lechwe numbers and tends to be the most productive birding area. After a lunch at camp, the afternoon will be dedicated to the floodplains east of camp.

Sunday 17 July

We will use the morning to further explore the areas we found to be of most interest. Depending on preferences of participants, we are likely to be back at camp before noon to ensure we have enough time to pack camp and return to Lusaka / home in good time.



Map

Blue Lagoon National Park is located south of the M9 (Lusaka – Mumbwa Rd) some 100 km west of Lusaka.

