



Birding Zambia

Your guide: Leslie Reynolds



Leslie Reynolds is a professional guide, photographer, artist, and ecological consultant. He grew up in rural Zimbabwe, where his interest in nature and birds was nurtured by frequent rambles into the bush around his home. He started recording his observations before he was entirely literate, and among his earliest field notes is the record of a “nesting Paralysed Flycatcher.”

After schooling in Zimbabwe, and tertiary studies in Durban, South Africa, he worked to establish a tourism project in the beautiful mountains of western Mozambique. This was an exciting adventure, involving months of camping in the bush and narrowly avoiding landmines left over from the Rhodesian bush-war, but it eventually had to be abandoned due to a lack of finance. Leslie found himself back in a largely defunct Zimbabwe, hankering for new ideas and places. His lucky break came with a job offer from the Kasanka Trust, in Zambia. Here he found the opportunity to build on his lifelong interests in nature, conservation, and birding, quickly gaining a reputation as a skillful, well-informed safari guide and attaining the position of Honorary Wildlife Police Officer under the Zambian Government. While with the Trust, he took the highly regarded Luangwa ‘walking and driving guide’ qualifications and instituted a training program for the Trust’s most promising local guides. After leaving Kasanka he has travelled over a vast amount of the country as a guide, consultant and trainer of Zambian guides. He became an active member of Birdwatch Zambia and has been on their committee for several years. Lapwing Safaris was founded in 2010, as a means to further his passion for birding and exploring. His broad-ranging interest in all fauna and flora makes for very lively and informative outings, as well as impressive lists of bird sightings. Birds aside, he is particularly drawn to the smaller creatures like butterflies, frogs and reptiles, and loves the challenge of tracking down and intercepting something truly rare and elusive. He has a carefully guarded and extensive library of reference books and will go all out to satisfy your curiosity on any point. In fact, only two questions have ever stumped him completely: ‘What is your favorite part of Africa?’ - and - ‘what is your favorite bird?’

Leslie’s approach to nature guiding includes a strong emphasis on ethical practice. His intimate knowledge of the birds and other animals he works with allows his clients a unique, close encounter without negatively affecting a subject’s livelihood. He is always eager to explain his techniques, and the boundaries he observes. As a photographer and birder, he is well acquainted with the full range of a client’s possible requirements, and with the means to meet them.

His other passions run to art, illustration, music and writing. He is an experienced, enthusiastic, and creative ‘bush cook’ whose tasty, healthy and original campfire meals, using fresh local produce, get rave reviews.