

Angola

2024 Tour Leaflet



Swierstra's Francolin © Michael Mills

21 August – 8 September 2024

Angola 2024



ENDEMIC IN COMFORT

- Targets all endemics
- Red-crested Turaco, White-headed Robin-Chat, Braun's Bushshrike, Gabela Akalat
- Led by Angola's top birder

Monteiro's Bushshrike © Tertius Gous



TOUR LEADER: MICHAEL MILLS



Michael's incredible focus, dedication and ability to locate and show Africa's toughest birds is probably unequalled. He has led dozens of tours across the continent and his experience in locating birds on just the softest of calls or briefest of views impresses those who travelled with him. Michael has spent a total of more than four years in Angola, and knows the country's birds better than anyone.

DATES

2024	21 Aug – 8 Sep
2025	10 – 28 Aug
2026	20 Aug – 7 Sep

PRICES FOR 2024

Per person sharing	\$7950
Single supplement	\$690

Starts/ends in Luanda.

BOOK ONLINE

Visit www.birdingafrica.com
Deposit (\$150) by credit card
Email info@birdingafrica.com



Gabela Helmetshrike © Michael Mills

We have pioneered birding tours to Angola since 2005. Our comprehensive 19-day itinerary is crafted on up-to-date knowledge of ever-changing road conditions, to efficiently target all of Angola's endemics.

Our tour commences in Luanda, with the first birding on the northern escarpment for the striking Braun's Bushshrike. From here we move east to Kalandula to search for White-headed Robin-Chat, before starting our journey to southern Angola. We'll stop at Muxima—for Grey-striped Francolin, Gabela Helmetshrike, White-fronted Wattle-eye and Monteiro's Bushshrike—and Kumbira forest—for Gabela Akalat, Gabela Bushshrike and Pulitzer's Longbill—before spending several days in the varied Huambo highlands. Here targets include Brazza's Martin, Bocage's Sunbird, Bocage's Weaver, Margaret's Batis and Black-chinned Weaver. This is followed by a loop through the arid south for Angola Slaty Flycatcher, White-tailed Shrike, Hartlaub's Francolin, Cinderella Waxbill, Swierstra's Francolin and Angola Cave Chat, before returning to Luanda.

TOUR FOCUS

This comprehensive itinerary will give us a good chance to see all of Angola's endemic birds, including splits, and a large number of specials. We expect to record 550 species in total. The tour is heavily bird-focused (little other wildlife), although the scenery is often spectacular and we will visit top attractions such as Kalandula Falls and Leba Pass.

A species list will be handed out to you as part of your tour booklet at the start of the tour and is available beforehand upon request.

The tour is timed to coincide with the breeding season of the endemic birds. Days will typically be warm to hot, but nights cooler in the highlands. We are likely to encounter a small amount of rain.

Travel conditions are generally reasonable, although service in hotels is often a bit slow. The route we follow makes use of the best roads and avoids the worst, but sections are still potholed and under construction, or a bit bumpy and dusty.



Red-crested Turaco © Tertius Gous

ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Accommodation and meals are generally of a reasonable standard. All rooms have private bathrooms and cold and hot running water is generally available. Although power supply can be unreliable, most hotels have backup generators.

Meals are a generally Portuguese-style, with a strong emphasis on starch and meat. Vegetarian options are limited. Some breakfasts and most lunches may be taken in the field.

Water is not safe to drink so we supply free bottled water in the vehicle that you can take to your rooms for drinking and brushing teeth.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum 9 participants in two 4x4s.

WALKING

This tour requires only a moderate degree of fitness. All walks will last less than four hours, except for one at Mt Moco, and be conducted at a manageable pace. Terrain where we walk is generally flat, except at Mount Moco where it is much steeper and rocky.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Participants are required to make their own international flight reservations.

The tour starts with dinner and accommodation in Luanda on Day 1. The tour ends in Luanda on the evening of Day 19 (excluding accommodation or dinner). Participants can leave Luanda any time after 21h00.

INTRODUCTION

Angola is one of the most biologically diverse countries in Africa. Following 30 years of civil war that ended in 2002, the country has been slow in opening up, which means that few birders have had the opportunity to sample its delights. With habitats ranging from Congo Basin forests to the Namib Desert, it is little surprise that the country has over 960 birds recorded. In addition, the escarpment and highlands of western Angola hold isolated patches of Afromontane and Congo Basin forests where numerous endemics have evolved in isolation. The combination of varied habitats, high species diversity and significant numbers of endemics and specials makes Angola one of the continent's top birding destinations.

On this tour we will visit all the key birding habitats in Angola. For the northern escarpment forests we base ourselves out of Uíge, where numerous Congo Basin birds occur alongside the endemic Braun's Bushshrike. The broadleaved woodlands and gallery forests of the Kalandula area host forest specials such as White-headed Robin-Chat alongside miombo species such as Anchieta's Barbet and Sharp-tailed Starling. Along the central escarpment, Kissama NP hosts dry forests at the foot of the escarpment. Here we hope to find

Gabela Helmetshrike, Monteiro's Bushshrike, White-fronted Wattle-eye, Grey-striped Francolin, Angola Batis, Yellow-throated Nicator, Pale-olive Greenbul, Hartert's Camaroptera, Landana Firefinch and Golden-backed Bishop. On top of the central escarpment we hope to find three of Angola's most Endangered endemics, namely Gabela Bushshrike, Gabela Akalat and Pulitzer's Longbill, with other possibilities including Red-crested Turaco, Yellow-throated Nicator, Yellow-necked Greenbul, Pale-olive Greenbul, Black-faced Canary and Landana Firefinch. We spend four days Afromontane habitats around Mount Moco and Tundavala. Here our main targets include Swierstra's Francolin (hard to see), Finsch's Francolin, Fülleborn's Longclaw, Angola Sweet Waxbill, Dusky Twinspot, Bocage's Weaver, Black-chinned Weaver, Oustalet's Sunbird, Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird, Bocage's Sunbird, Angola Slaty Flycatcher, Angola Cave Chat, Bocage's Akalat, Huambo Cisticola, Black-and-rufous Swallow, Brazza's Martin, Black-collared Bulbul and Angola Lark. Finally, the arid habitats of the south are home to "Namibian specials" such as Cinderella Waxbill, Benguela Long-tailed Starling, Rüppell's Korhaan, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, White-tailed Shrike and Monteiro's Hornbill.

Angola Batis © Michael Mills



ITINERARY AND MAP

- Day 1 Arrive. Overnight in Luanda.
- Day 2 Luanda to Uíge. Overnight in Uíge.
- Day 3 Northern escarpment birding. Overnight in Uíge.
- Day 4 Uíge to Kalandula. Overnight in Kalandula.
- Day 5 Full day in the Kalandula area. Overnight in Kalandula.
- Day 6 Full day in the Kalandula area. Overnight in Kalandula.
- Day 7 Kalandula to Muxima area. Overnight near Cabala.
- Day 8 Full day in the Muxima area. Overnight near Cabala.
- Day 9 Muxima to Conda. Overnight near Conda.
- Day 10 Kumbira Forest and surrounds. Overnight near Conda.
- Day 11 Namba Mountains Day Trip. Overnight near Conda.
- Day 12 Conda to Waku Kungo via Huambo Highlands. Overnight in Waku Kungo.
- Day 13 Full Day in the Huambo Highlands. Overnight in Huambo.
- Day 14 Huambo to Benguela via Mount Moco. Overnight near Benguela.
- Day 15 Benguela to Lubango. Overnight in Lubango.
- Day 16 Full day at Tundavala. Overnight in Lubango.
- Day 17 Lubango to Namibe Coast. Overnight along Namibe Coast.
- Day 18 Namibe Coast to Lobito. Overnight in Lobito.
- Day 19 Lobito to Luanda. Tour ends.

Brazza's Martin © Michael Mills



DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive in Luanda

Welcome to Angola! The tour officially commences with dinner and an overnight stay along the Ilha of Luanda, Angola's vibrant capital city.

Day 2: Luanda to Uíge

This morning we begin early, heading north-east out of Luanda to Uíge. Our first planned stop will be in some dry forests after about 90 minutes, where we should see our first specials and endemics: Red-backed Mousebird, Angola Batis, White-fronted Wattle-eye, Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush, Bubbling Cisticola and Golden-backed Bishop and likely, and there is a chance for Gabela Helmetshrike, Pale-olive Greenbul and Monteiro's Bushshrike. Later on we'll pause for a picnic lunch, some birding at the Dande River where White-throated Blue Swallow and Cassin's Flycatcher are possible, and as we near Uíge in the afternoon we will stop in some moister roadside forest for our first try for Braun's Bushshrike. Overnight in Uíge.

Braun's Bushshrike © Tertius Gous



Day 3: Northern escarpment

We have a full day to explore various patches of northern escarpment forest within an hour's drive of Uíge. Braun's Bushshrike is, of course, the main target for the day, but a long list of other species is possible, including Banded Prinia, Lowland Masked Apalis, Black-throated Apalis, Buff-throated Apalis, Brown-backed Scrub Robin, Orange-tufted Sunbird, Purple-throated Cuckooshrike, Forest Chestnut-winged Starling, Black-winged Oriole, Velvet-mantled Drongo, Brown Twinspot, Naked-faced Barbet, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Eastern Yellow-billed Barbet, White-breasted Nigrita, Black Bee-eater, Green-throated Sunbird, Little Green Sunbird, Congo Pied Hornbill, Bristle-nosed Barbet, Speckled Tinkerbird, Red-rumped Tinkerbird, Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Sooty Flycatcher, Hairy-breasted Barbet, Eastern Piping Hornbill, Yellow-crested Woodpecker, Chestnut Wattle-eye, Red-fronted Parrot and Cassin's Honeybird. Unfortunately most of the accessible forests have been heavily



Pale-billed Hornbill © Michael Mills

logged, making it very hard to find Angola White-throated Greenbul. White-collared Oliveback, discovered on a Birding Africa tour in 2011, is also possible but rather rare. There is also a chance for Forest Swallow. Overnight in Uíge town.

Day 4: Uíge to Kalandula

After some final birding in the Uíge area we'll drive along the main road to Kalandula Falls. A stop at the Lucala River could turn up Rock Pratincole if water levels are favourable. Overnight at Kalandula.

Days 5–6: Kalandula Falls region

Our main reason for visiting the Kalandula region is to search for the striking and localised White-headed Robin-Chat in the gallery forests some 40 km north of the falls. Sharing the same habitat are species such as Grey-winged Robin-Chat, Bannerman's

Sunbird (alongside the very similar Green-headed Sunbird), Brown-headed Apalis, African Broadbill, Narina Trogon, Cabanis's Greenbul and Red-crested Turaco.

We'll also bird the surrounding woodlands which are the most reliable site for Anchieta's Barbet and Sharp-tailed Starling. Other species of interest may include Pale-billed Hornbill, Anchieta's Sunbird, Western Violet-backed Sunbird, Red-throated Cliff Swallow, Meyer's Parrot, Retz's Helmetshrike and its brood parasite, Thick-billed Cuckoo, and Miombo Scrub Robin. Overnight in Kalandula town.

Day 7: Kalandula to Muxima area

Today we drive to the Muxima area, along the mighty Kwanza River. We'll stop en route to look for Rock Pratincole, and as we near our accommodation we'll enjoy some wetland birding. Overnight near Muxima.



White-headed Robin-Chat © Tertius Gous

Day 8: Muxima area

Dry forests in the vicinity of Muxima make for some of the country's most endemic-rich birding. In the early morning we'll watch for Grey-striped Francolin on the sides of the road. A whole host of dry forest birds is on offer, with Gabela Helmetshrike, Monteiro's Bushshrike and White-fronted Wattle-eye top of the list. Other species on offer include African Barred Owlet, Red-backed Mousebird, Olive Bee-eater, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Pale-olive Greenbul, Swamp Boubou, Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush, Bubbling Cisticola, Forest Scrub Robin, Green Crombec, Purple-banded Sunbird, Yellow-throated Nicator and Angola Batis. Overnight near Muxima.

Day 9: Muxima to Conda

After some final birding in the Muxima area we'll drive down the ever-drier coast. In the afternoon we'll visit some remnant patches of central scarp forest, with a chance of Gabela Akalat. Night near Conda.

Day 10: Kumbira

Kumbira Forest is home to three Endangered central-scarp endemics, namely Pulitzer's Longbill, Gabela Bushshrike and Gabela Akalat. Unfortunately slash-and-burn farming has caused major population declines in all three species, although the akalat is still common and the longbill is normally not too hard to find. The

bushshrike has become rather rare and hard to find now, having been fairly common only 15 years ago, so we may have to search for it at some backup sites. Other birds we may find at Kumbira include Red-crested Turaco, Southern Hyliota, Dusky Tit, Yellow-throated Nicator, Yellow-necked Greenbul, Pale-olive Greenbul, Brown Illadopsis, Hartert's Camaroptera, Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye, Superb Sunbird, Forest Scrub Robin, Gorgeous Bushshrike, African Broadbill, Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher, Black-faced Canary, Pink-footed Puffback, Angolan Naked-faced Barbet, Trumpeter Hornbill and Grey Waxbill. Overnight near Conda village.

Day 11: Namba Mountains Day Trip

The highlands of Huambo and Cuanza Sul form one of the most diverse regions in the country. We allow ourselves the better part of four days to explore their Afromontane forests, montane grasslands, miombo woodlands and dambo grasslands, based at various different towns.

Today, from our base at Conda, we'll make a long day trip to the Namba Mountains where Angola's largest patches of Afromontane Forest remain. Here we stand chances of seeing highly localised species such as Margaret's Batis, Laura's Woodland Warbler, Evergreen Forest Robin, Bocage's Akalat, Huambo Cisticola, Bar-tailed Trogon, Thick-billed Seed-eater and Pale-throated Barbet.

We'll leave before sunrise and return to our accommodation after sunset.

Day 12: Conda to Waku Kungo

Starting out from Conda we pass through many of the areas we did yesterday, this time taking our time to bird the woodlands and dambo grasslands en route. Woodland target species for today include Miombo Tit, Rufous-bellied Tit, Western Miombo Sunbird, African Spotted Creeper and Yellow-bellied Hyliota. In the dambos we'll search for Brazza's Martin, Black-and-rufous Swallow, Fülleborn's Longclaw, Sooty Chat, Chirping Cisticola, Fawn-breasted Waxbill, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Brown Firefinch, Hartlaub's Marsh Widowbird, Stout Cisticola, Bocage's Sunbird and Bocage's Weaver. Overnight in Waku Kungo.

Day 13: Waku Kungo to Huambo

A second day in woodlands and dambos target a different set of species, although it's a race against time with many of the last patches of miombo being hacked away. We hope to find Black-necked Eremomela, the curious local race of Brubru, Green-capped Eremomela, Miombo Scrub Robin, Miombo Pied Barbet (rare), Miombo Wren-Warbler, Red-capped Crombec, Locust-finch, Woodland Pipit, Salvadori's Eremomela, Grey Penduline-Tit, Sousa's Shrike and Böhm's Flycatcher. Overnight in Huambo.

Angola Lark © Michael Mills



Day 14: Mount Moco and on to Benguela

Today we visit Angola's highest mountain, and the site of a dedicated forest conservation project. Here the forests support diminishing populations of Swierstra's Francolin, Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird, Bocage's Akalat, Schalow's Turaco, Evergreen Forest Warbler, Thick-billed Seed-eater, Grey Apalis, African Hill Babbler, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher, Olive Woodpecker, Western Green Tinkerbird and Black-backed Barbet. Forest edge also supports Huambo Cisticola, Yellow-throated Leaf-love, Dusky Twinspot, Angolan Sweet Waxbill, Black-throated Wattle-eye, Oustalet's Sunbird, Bronzy Sunbird, African Spotted Creeper, Red-throated Wryneck and Black-chinned Weaver. The surrounding grasslands and rocky areas hold an endemic race of Mountain Wheatear, Horus Swift, Striped Pipit, Capped Wheatear, Black-collared Bulbul, Angola Lark, Broad-tailed

Warbler (Fan-tailed Grassbird), Ayres's/Wing-snapping Cisticola, and the very difficult Finsch's Francolin. After a morning at Mt Moco we'll continue on the Benguela on the coast. Overnight in or near Benguela.

Day 15: Benguela to Lubango

The arid savanna and rocky hillsides inland of Benguela form the most northerly tongue of Namibian Escarpment habitat, and provide an opportunity to look for several species mostly associated with Namibia. We have a morning here, looking for Hartlaub's Francolin, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Rüppell's Parrot, Barred Wren-Warbler, White-tailed Shrike, Cape Penduline Tit, Carp's Tit, Pririt Batis, Monteiro's Hornbill and Southern Yellow-billed. There is also a chance for Orange River Francolin. In the afternoon we'll continue on to Lubango. Overnight in Lubango.



Angola Cave Chat © Michael Mills

Day 16: Tundavala

Views down the spectacular southern escarpment are best had from Tundavala near Lubango. The rocky area also holds a variety of grassland, escarpment and forest birds. Top of the list is the localised Angola Cave Chat, found alongside Angola Slaty Flycatcher, Swierstra's Francolin (rare), Short-toed Rock Thrush, Angolan Sweet Waxbill, Freckled Nightjar, Bradfield's Swift, Rockrunner, Tinkling Cisticola, Wailing Cisticola, Buffy Pipit, Striped Pipit, Oustalet's Sunbird and Jameson's Firefinch. We'll also search for the localised White-bellied Barbet. Overnight in Lubango.

Day 17: Lubango to Namibe coast

The road from Lubango to Namibe starts at around 2300 m altitude on the Humpata Plateau, rapidly dropping down the spectacular Leba Pass to the lowlands below. Our first stop will be at the base of the escarpment where we hope to track down Cinderella Waxbill, Hartlaub's Babbler, Bennett's Woodpecker and Benguela Long-tailed Starling. As we drive west towards the coast the habitat gets drier and drier. Initially arid bushveld is home to Dusky Sunbird, Karoo Chat, Chat Flycatcher, Cape Sparrow

and Southern Fiscal, but eventually we'll reach barren desert plains where Benguela Long-billed Lark and Rüppell's Korhaan are the main targets. Other possibilities include Ludwig's Bustard, Double-banded Courser, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Greater Kestrel, Pale-winged Starling, Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark and Stark's Lark. Overnight on the coast of Namibe.

Day 18: Namibe coast to Lobito

Today we continue our journey through the coastal deserts of Namibe, keeping an eye out for any species we may have missed yesterday. In the Benguela and Lobito areas we'll enjoy some wetland birding in the later afternoon, where Cape Teal, Black Heron, African Royal Tern, Chestnut-banded Plover and Lesser Flamingo area possible, alongside a variety of other more widespread waterbirds. Overnight in Lobito.

Day 19: Lobito to Luanda

Today we return to Luanda along the coastal route. Lunch will be taken at the Kwanza River mouth, where Brown Sunbird occurs in the mangroves. Our final stop will be at Mussulo Bay for some wader watching. The tour ends on arrival back in Luanda.

Bocage's Sunbirds © Michael Mills



INCLUDED

- Guiding services of the Birding Africa tour leader
- Entry fees and activities as per itinerary
- Hotel accommodation throughout
- Airport transfers in Luanda on 21 August and 8 September
- Bottled water in the vehicle
- One soft drink at each sit-down meal
- General tips

QUESTIONS?

Please email the office, info@birdingafrica.com, to reserve a place or ask questions (you can also cc michael@birdingafrica.com and callan@birdingafrica.com who are both involved in the planning of this tour.

BOOKLET AND CHECKLIST

Birding Africa provides:

1. this tour leaflet with detailed itinerary
2. the tour information pack, emailed to you
3. the tour booklet with checklists, on the tour

HOW TO BOOK

1. Complete our easy online booking form.
2. Secure your booking deposit by credit card on our 3D secure online payment site (\$150).
3. Settle the balance by bank transfer 150 days before the tour. We will email you a reminder and the banking details.

