

Central, Western and Coastal Kenya in search of the Kenya Birding Big Five 28 November – 12 Dec 2018

with Birding in Kenya Safaris (www.birdinginkenyasafaris.com)

15 days and 14 nights, 4-6 participants

Leader: James Bradley and local guides

\$6200USD pp from Nairobi, based on double occupancy (\$400 single person suppl.)

The Kenya Birding Big Five:

Saddle-billed Stork – a giant of extensive wetlands, with a remarkable beak

Secretarybird – unique and locally common, it catches grassland snakes by stamping on them

Great Blue Turaco – a stunning and memorable bird of lowland rainforests

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl – a very large woodland owl with pink eye lids

Southern Ground Hornbill – a turkey sized grassland bird with rapidly declining populations

Kenya is rightly known as one of the world's finest birding destinations. There are quite simply very few places on earth where one can sample such a variety of habitat, with such a richness of birds, across such a small area. Combine this with good infrastructure, very comfortable accommodations, and a generous people who take pride in what they can offer, and it should be on every true birders bucket list.

This tour is based largely on our very successful Nov 2016 tour but with an extra domestic flight and relatively more time in game reserves on the itinerary. After arriving in Nairobi in the early morning (or the night before), we'll spend a day acclimating in the city with a visit to Nairobi National Park to search for grassland specialists and big game, followed by our first night at comfortable nearby accommodations. From there, we'll head north to the slopes of Mt Kenya and the Aberdares, taking in spectacular panoramas and cool montane forests in search of Afrotropical highland forest specialists. We'll visit the world famous Jefferson Rift Valley at saline Lake Nakuru, where there will be more game viewing opportunities and spectacular flamingoes, before we explore the lush and rich tropical rainforest of Kakamega. Lastly, arid thornscrub, semi-desert birds and game viewing await us in Tsavo NP, followed by ancient woodlands, beaches and estuarine flats on the Kenya coast. It is a world class tour route that promises an unforgettable experience.

We'll be searching for the special birds of all these regions, and hope to see 500 or more species, not to mention 25 species or more of mammals and reptiles. Expect to see the vivid Hartlaub's Turaco, gaudy Golden-breasted Starlings, iridescent sunbirds and the bizarre looking Crab Plover among a large number of similarly impressive species. We'll bird with skilled local guides to try and find some difficult species, including Olive Ibis, Sokoke Pipit and Grey-crested Helmetshrike or endemics such as Sharpe's Longclaw and Clarke's Weaver, while enjoying representatives from a huge variety of

unique African bird families. Accommodations are comfortable and serve good to excellent food all along our route, and with luck we'll also find some big game. Elephants, rhinoceros and lions are targets in four different National Parks/Reserves we'll visit.

All vehicle transport, meals and accommodations, fees for visits to 4 different parks, local guide fees and bottled drinking water are included in the price of the tour. Travel will be in an open-top minibus van for game viewing, and two domestic flights will take us comfortably over greater distances. Contact james_bradley@ymail.com for more details.

- Day 1: Tour begins with arrival of flights at JK International Airport in the morning. Game viewing and birding by vehicle in Nairobi National Park, overnight in Nairobi.
- Day 2&3: Travel to Mt Kenya for two nights at a forest lodge. Local forest birding on foot.
- Day 4&5: Travel to Lake Nakuru for two night stay at a game lodge. Game viewing and birding on foot and by vehicle.
- Day 6: Travel to Kisumu for one night at a lakeside hotel. Birding and wildlife viewing by boat.
- Day 7&8: Travel to Kakamega Forest for two nights at a forest retreat. Local birding on foot and with short distances by vehicle.
- Day 9: Late morning travel to Nairobi by air from Kisumu. Overnight at a nearby game lodge with local birding on foot.
- Day 10&11: Travel to Tsavo East NP for two night stay at a game lodge. Game viewing and birding by vehicle
- Day 12-14: Travel to the north Kenya Coast through Tsavo for three night stay at a beach side hotel. Local birding on foot.
- Day 15: Return travel to Nairobi by air for tour end.