

**Kenya: Great Migration & Birding**  
**August 1—18, 2024**  
**With Johnny Wilson and local guides**

**Brief itinerary\***

You may wish to arrive in Nairobi the day before to rest before the tour starts. Just let us know your flight plans and whether you will need an extra night in Nairobi.

**Day 1: Aug 1, 2024** **Arrival in Nairobi**

On arrival you will be met by your guide at the airport. You will then proceed to your hotel, crossing the city as you enjoy your first birds of the trip. Of particular interest will be Marabou storks, the bird with the longest bill, frequently perched on thorn trees around town. If time allows, we may visit a local forest for some birding, before settling down at our hotel (on the fringes of Nairobi National Park) for the night. Overnight in Nairobi (Nairobi Ole Serengi 254 Hotel).

**Day 2: Aug 2, 2024** **Transfer to Mt. Kenya**

We will have an early start to the day, heading towards Mt. Kenya via the industrial town of Thika where we will look for the endemic Hinde's Babbler, while Meyer's Parrot, Spot-flanked Barbet, Northern Pied Babbler, Gray-Olive Greenbul, and Crimson-rumped Waxbill are also possible. Then it's onward to Mount Kenya where we will have a brief birding session once we settled in at our lodge. Species possible during this short introductory outing include Mountain Buzzard, African Crowned-Eagle, Delegorgue's Pigeon, Mountain Yellow Warbler, Golden-winged and Tacazze Sunbird, and Oriole Finch. Overnight at Mt. Kenya (Castle Lodge, Mt Kenya).

**Day 3: Aug 3, 2024** **Mt Kenya**

After an early breakfast, we will head to nearby local woodlands, wetlands, and montane grasslands to look for Scaly Francolin, African Cuckoo-Hawk, Hunter's Cisticola, Kandt's Waxbill, and Yellow-crowned Canary. We will soon reach the montane forest edge from where we will encounter an entirely new suite of species, most notably the highly localized Abbott's Starling and Kikuyu White-eye. Other forest specials to be found on Mount Kenya include Dusky Turtle Dove, Hartlaub's Turaco, Olive Ibis, Bar-tailed Trogon, White-headed Wood-Hoopoe, Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Tullberg's Woodpecker, Red-fronted Parrot, White-browed Crombec, Black-throated and Black-collared Apalis, Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler, Slender-billed, Sharpe's, and Kenrick's Starling, Abyssinian Ground Thrush, Abyssinian Crimsonwing, and Grey-headed Nigrita. It is also here where we're likely to see our first Kenyan mammals: Rock Hyrax, Blue Monkey, Bushbuck, Olive Baboon, Mantled Guereza, and Cape Buffalo are all possibilities. At night, we might hear the calls of Abyssinian Nightjar and Southern Tree Hyrax, while a White-tailed Mongoose or Rusty-spotted Genet might also show itself. Overnight at Mt. Kenya (Castle Lodge, Mt Kenya).

**Day 4 and 5: Aug 4-5, 2024** **Buffalo Springs and Samburu National Reserves**

We will leave Mount Kenya early for the arid savannas of Samburu National Reserve, famous for being the location of the Movie Born Free book and movie. The road towards Samburu can be very birdy, and we will make an extra effort to look for Boran Cisticola en route. The excitement will get palpable as we close in on the reserve, and we will be keeping an eye for the near-endemic Donaldson-Smith's Sparrow-Weaver, while Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark, Fan-tailed Raven, Bristle-

crowned, Fischer's, and Magpie Starling, Straw-tailed Whydah, Foxy, Red-winged, and Pink-breasted Lark are also possibilities. Once in the reserve, we will continue to scout for birds as we enjoy local mammals such as Leopard, Lion, Beisa Oryx, Gerenuk, Grevy's Zebra, Reticulated Giraffe, Desert Warthog, Gunther's Dik-Dik, and African Bush Elephants. Other birds we will look for here and in Buffalo Springs National Reserve on the other side of the Ewaso Ng'iro River including Somali Ostrich, Vulturine Guineafowl, Buff-crested Bustard, Black-faced and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Somali Courser, White-headed Mousebird, Von der Decken's Hornbill, Somali Bee-eater, Red-bellied Parrot, Pygmy Batis, Rosy-patched Bush-Shrike, Somali Tit, Somali Crombec, Yellow-vented Eremomela, Pale Prinia, Red-fronted Prinia, Ashy Cisticola, Rufous Chatterer, Golden-breasted Starling, Shining Sunbird, Donaldson-Smith Sparrow-Weaver, and Golden Palm-Weaver. On our second day we will spend part of the day venturing north of the reserves to Sheba, where some tough walking on rocky lava grounds will hopefully produce an endemic William's Lark. Large raptors also abound in this big game country, with Ruppell's Griffon, Egyptian Vulture, Bateleur, Martial Eagle, African Hawk-Eagle, and Tawny Eagle all possible. Because we spend the night in Samburu, we will have an opportunity to search for nightbirds around the lodge, which will hopefully produce Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar, Sombre Nightjar, Slender-tailed Nightjar, African Scops-Owl, and Verreaux's Eagle-Owl. Overnight in Samburu (Samburu Simba Lodge).

**Day 6: Aug 6, 2024**

**Lake Nakuru National Park**

Lake Nakuru is famed as the birdwatchers' paradise, and indeed was the first national park in Africa to be set aside with an avian conservation objective. Up to a million flamingos have been recorded in this park, with Lesser Flamingo generally more common than Greater Flamingo. Aside from the flamingoes, the lake also provide a safe haven for Gray Crowned-Crane, Blue-billed Teal, Knob-billed Duck, Great White and Pink-backed Pelican, and African Jacana, while the surrounding woodlands hold Hildebrandt's Francolin, White-headed Barbet, Little Rock-Thrush, and the sought-after Grey-crested Helmetshrike. The park is also a sanctuary for rhinos—both Eastern Black and Southern White Rhinoceros can be seen here with three other members of the Big Five (Lion, Leopard, African Buffalo); any of these may be encountered as we search for birds throughout the two parks. Other large mammals include the rare Rothschild's Giraffe, while tour participants should also have a great opportunity to see both the Common and Defassa subspecies of the Waterbuck. Overnight in Nakuru (Lake Nakuru Lodge).

**Day 7: Aug 7, 2024**

**Lake Baringo**

We will leave Nakuru early to bird along the way as necessary en route to Lake Baringo, after Lake Turkana the northernmost of Kenya's Rift Valley lakes. Once there, we will drive and walk around the scrubland and the cliffs surrounding the lake in search of Verreaux's Eagle, Black-headed Lapwing, Red-and-Yellow Barbet, Jackson's Hornbill, Hemprich's Hornbill, Brown-tailed Chat, Shining Sunbird, Beautiful Sunbird, White-billed Buffalo-Weaver, Northern Masked-Weaver, Golden-backed Weaver, Northern Red Bishop, Blue-capped Cordon-bleu, and White-bellied Canary. There is also a good selection of nightbirds possible at this venue, including Greyish Eagle-Owl, Northern White-faced Scops-Owl, Slender-tailed Nightjar, and Three-banded Courser. Overnight in Baringo (Baringo Soi Lodge).

**Day 8: Aug 8, 2024**

**Lake Baringo**

We start the day with a boat ride on Lake Baringo to search of waterbirds like Allen's Gallinule, African Swamphen, Long-toed Lapwing, Black Crake, Goliath Heron, Little Bittern, Purple Heron, and White-faced Whistling Duck. The boat ride experience will also help you enjoy the beauty of the lake and see the local

African Fish-Eagles advertising their territories as they hunt. We should be done by lunchtime, after which we will again scour the woodlands surrounding the lake for birds we may have missed the previous day. During this time, we might also venture towards nearby Kabarnet, where we will look for the gaudy White-crested Turaco, while Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver is also a possibility. Overnight in Baringo (Baringo Soi Lodge).

**Day 9-10: Aug 9-10, 2024**                      **Kakamega Forest**

After a long drive, we will reach Kakamega Forest in western Kenya, which is a remnant of the Guineo-Congolian Equatorial forests that are more widespread in Central Africa. Among the most sought-after species we will look for during several walks into the only tropical rainforest in Kenya is the endemic subspecies of the Shelley's (Kakamega) Greenbul, while the isolated populations of the Blue-headed Bee-eater, Ansorge's Greenbul, Chapin's Flycatcher, and Turner's Eremomela are also noteworthy. Other forest birds possible during the two days here include Great Blue Turaco, White-spotted Flufftail, Banded Snake-Eagle, Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill, Yellow-billed and Yellow-spotted Barbet, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Gray Parrot, Petit's Cuckooshrike, Jameson's and Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye, Pink-footed Puffback, Gray-green Bush-Shrike, Sharpe's Drongo, Southern Hyliota, Dusky Tit, Green Hylia, White-chinned Prinia, Black-faced Rufous-Warbler, Toro Olive Greenbul, Uganda Woodland Warbler, White-tailed Ant-Thrush, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Equatorial Akalat, Gray-chested Babbler, Green-throated Sunbird, Red-headed Malimbe, White-breasted Nigrita, and Red-headed Bluebill. Diurnal mammals to be seen while birding include Red-tailed Monkey, Mantled Guereza, and Blue Monkey, while we may even see a Forest Giant Squirrel if we're lucky. Night birding at Kakamega can be quiet at times, with the Red-chested Owlet and African Wood Owl most likely. However, things can get very exciting on the mammalian front with East African Potto, Rusty-spotted Genet, and Hammer-headed Bat possible. Overnight in Kakamega (Kakamega Rondo Retreat).

**Day 11: Aug 11, 2024**                      **Lake Victoria**

Today we will travel to the lakeside city of Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria. The local riparian zone will be our major target, where we will hope to see Eastern Grey Plantain-eater, Blue-headed Coucal, African Openbill, Gray-headed Kingfisher, Black-billed and Double-toothed Barbet, Carruther's Cisticola, White-winged Swamp Warbler, Red-chested Sunbird, Papyrus Canary, and Ruppell's Starling. To maximize our chances to see these species, we will also enjoy a boat ride, which will hopefully give us close-up views of Spur-winged Lapwing, Papyrus Gonolek, Black-headed Gonolek, Papyrus Yellow-Warbler, Northern Brown-throated Weaver, Slender-billed Weaver, and Swamp Flycatcher. Overnight in Kisumu (Kisumu Sovereign Hotel).

**Day 12: Aug 12, 2024**                      **Lake Naivasha**

We will leave Kisumu early to maximize our time at Naivasha, our next destination. Here we will sample several local birding spots to look for bird species characteristic of Kenya's moist savannas, including Nyanza Swift, Mottled Swift, Nubian Woodpecker, Mountain Gray Woodpecker, Grey-backed Fiscal, White-bellied Tit, Buff-bellied Warbler, White-headed Sawwing, White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher, Purple Grenadier, and Kenya Rufous Sparrow. A boat ride on Lake Naivasha will be a highlight, giving us access to Black Heron with its peculiar way of feeding, as well as White-backed Duck, Maccoa Duck, African Spoonbill, Goliath Heron, Giant Kingfisher, Lesser and Greater Flamingo, Great White and Pink-backed

Pelican, African Fish Eagle, Osprey, and Gray Crowned-Crane. Overnight in Naivasha (Naivasha Sopa Resort).

**Day 13: Aug 13, 2024**

**Kinangop Grasslands; Aberdare National Park**

Using Naivasha as a base, we will do a daytrip to the Kinangop Grasslands and Aberdares National Park, home to some of Kenya's most sought-after endemic bird species. As we work our way from the region's lower grasslands up to the Aberdares highlands, we will hope to see Aberdare Cisticola, Jackson's Francolin, Hunter's Cisticola, Jackson's Widowbird, and Sharpe's Longclaw. Other species possible while searching for these specials include Doherty's Bushshrike, Brown Woodland Warbler, Mountain Yellow Warbler, Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler, Eastern Mountain Greenbul, and Moorland Chat. Aberdare also hosts several mammal species, including Bohor Reedbuck, Suni, Giant Forest Hog, and Side-striped Jackal. Night in Naivasha (Naivasha Sopa Resort).

**Day 14-16: Aug 14-16, 2024**

**Masai Mara National Reserve**

Today we're heading to the Masai Mara National Reserve. Bound to be the crown of our East African safari experience, this area is renowned for its annual wildebeest migration which is often regarded as the 8th Wonder of the World. Apart from the (Western White-bearded) Wildebeest, this productive landscape has a lot to offer, from the famous Big Five (African Lion, Cape Buffalo, Savannah Elephant, Black Rhino, Leopard) to numerous herbivore species grazing the open grasslands. While we enjoy the mammal spectacle, we will also spend some time enjoying the local avifauna the region has on offer, which includes Red-winged Francolin, Kori Bustard, White-bellied Bustard, Yellow-throated Sandgrouse, Ross' Turaco, Bare-faced Go-away-bird, Saddle-billed Stork, Rufous-bellied Heron, Southern Ground-Hornbill, White-throated Bee-eater, Slate-colored Boubou, Taita Fiscal, African Blue Flycatcher, Fischer's Sparrow-Lark, Somali Short-toed Lark, Tabora Cisticola, Highland Rush Warbler, Banded Parisoma, Silverbird, Rufous-tailed Weaver, Swahili Sparrow, and Rosy-throated Longclaw. Birds of Prey also abound with Secretarybird, Wahlberg's Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Dark-chanting Goshawk, Augur Buzzard, and Grey Kestrel all possible, while Lappet-faced Vulture, Ruppell's Griffon, and White-headed Vulture are bound to be in attendance where large predators are. Overnight in Masai Mara (Pride Inn Mara Azure Lodge).

**Day 17: Aug 17, 2024**

**Transfer to Nairobi**

On this day, we shall enjoy some morning birding in the Mara before we start the journey back to Nairobi. Night in Nairobi (Nairobi Ole Serengi 254 Hotel).

**Day 18: Aug 18, 2024**

**Nairobi National Park; Tour Ends**

We shall spend the entire day in Nairobi National Park. Located mere kilometers from the edge of Nairobi's city center, over 500 bird species have been recorded here, including Shelley's Francolin, Yellow-necked Francolin, Hartlaub's Bustard, Yellow-throated Sandgrouse, Blue-naped Mousebird, Brown-backed Woodpecker, Red-throated Tit, White-tailed Lark, Short-tailed Lark, Ruppell's Robin-Chat, Speke's Weaver, and Pangani Longclaw, as well as the local subspecies of the Long-billed (Nairobi) Pipit. The park also hosts four of the African Big Five (African Lion, Black Rhino, Leopard and Cape Buffalo), which we will search for while enjoying numerous Eastern White-bearded Wildebeest, Masai Giraffe, Plains Zebra, Common Eland, Impala, Grant's and Thomson's Gazelle, Coke's Hartebeest until we have to leave for the airport for our flights home.

**\*Order of days and accommodation may change if logistically necessary.**