



Mass Audubon Tours  
*supporting conservation here and abroad*

## **Birding and Primate Safari in Uganda**



**Feb. 9 -25, 2010**  
***With Chris Leahy***

Uganda is a country of startling contrasts. No other African country can match its astonishing variety of habitats including savanna, vast wetlands, arid semi-deserts, montane and lowland rainforests, volcanoes and an afro-alpine zone. Uganda's bird life is remarkable, with birds found in both East and West Africa. A highlight is the chance to see the Shoebill — among Africa's great rarities. Uganda boasts a national bird list of over 1008 species!

This tour will explore Uganda's fantastic national parks, including the Queen Elizabeth National Park, with large numbers of wild animals in a glorious setting of lakes, rivers and savannahs; and Murchison Falls National Park, where the riverbanks are lined with wildlife. We can expect to see elephants, lions, hippos, buffaloes, Uganda Kob and, of course, a great variety of birds. We will also spend time looking for the wild Mountain Gorilla's and tracking other primates in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park.

*(photos thanks to Jerry Bertrand)*



## Birding & Primate Safari in Uganda ~ Daily Itinerary

### **Day 1: Feb 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010 ~ Arrive in Entebbe Airport in Kimpalu, Uganda.**

Feb 9<sup>th</sup> - arrive in Entebbe, Uganda Our local guide, Herbert Byaruhanga will meet you at the Entebbe airport and transfer you to the **Lindsay Cottages**, *located near Kampala on the Entebbe Road. This is the one of the best accommodations around Kampala. Private rooms, baths, and swimming pool are available.*

**Day 2: Feb 10<sup>th</sup> - Lake Mburo National Park:** We will have breakfast at the hotel, then visit Mabamba Swamp (west of Kampala) for the Shoebill. Later today, we will travel to Lake Mburo National Park, well-known for its rare species, which include Red faced Barbet, Tabora Cisticola, Green-backed Woodpecker, Rufus-bellied Heron, and Papyrus Gonolek. It is also home to other wildlife including Topi, Impala, Eland, Sitatunga etc. After dinner, we will have evening game drive in Park. Overnight at Mihingo Lodge. (B,L,D)

**Day 3: Feb 11<sup>th</sup> ~ Lake Mburo National Park to Ruhiiija Bwindi Park:** After breakfast, we start with early birding in Lake Mburo National Park. After exploring and lunch, we will proceed to Ruhiiija Bwindi Park, approximately 200km (mostly paved!). Bwindi is birders' paradise! It holds 348 species of birds and contains 90% of all Albertine rift Endemic species such as: the Short-tailed Warbler, Rusty-faced Woodland Warbler, Bar-tailed Trogon, Willcock's Honeyguide, Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher, Oberlaender's Ground Thrush, Dusky Crimsonwing, and White-tailed Blue Flycatcher among others. It is difficult or impossible to see many of these birds in any other part of East Africa. We will have 2 overnights here at **Ruhiiija Bwindi Park Hostel**. *This hostel is quite basic, but well located to the wildlife. There is no electricity, here and the beds in the hostel bunks. We shall carry camping tents for those who prefer to stay in the tents.* (B,L,D)

**Day 4: Feb 12<sup>th</sup> ~ Ruhiiija Bwindi Park:** Ruhiiija Bwindi Park has multiple wonderful trails. Today, we will hike and bird to the Mubwindi swamp. A hot picnic lunch will be provided so we can spend all day in the field. Overnight at Ruhiiija Bwindi Park Hostel. (B,L,D)

**Day 5: Feb 13<sup>th</sup> ~ Ruhiiija Bwindi Park.** We begin the day early with more birding in the Buhoma area of the Ruhiiija Bwindi Park. We then have a full day's drive through the country to the Gorilla Forest Camp. We will overnight 3 nights at **Gorilla Forest Camp** *(A small, tented camp inside in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park. There are eight rooms/tents with ensuite bathrooms. The restaurant and lounge area overlook the forest. There is electricity provided, but the camp is quite eco-sensitive and tries to have as little impact as possible on the surrounding forest).* (B,L,D)

**Day 6: Feb 14<sup>th</sup> Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park** Bwindi is a sanctuary to approximately half of the world's population of Mountain Gorillas. This is the world's most endangered ape. The forest is heavily protected by Ugandan authorities. We will have the opportunity for one day's trek to try and find and observe the Gorillas. We will be in the company of outstanding local guides and trackers who track the gorilla's daily. The trekking is taxing and can take anywhere between one and six hours, climbing to altitudes of as much as 7,500 feet. The terrain is rough and at times muddy but once found, the Gorillas make it all worthwhile. Overnight at Gorilla Forest Camp (B,L,D)

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**Day 7: Feb 15th Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park** Today we will spend the day birding the trails of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park. We will have take time to look for some of the specialties we may have missed. Overnight at Gorilla Forest Camp (B,L,D)

**Day 8: Feb 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008 ~ Queen Elizabeth National Park**

We travel today to Queen Elizabeth National Park, an excellent destination for birding, with an eye-popping 604 bird species recorded here! We will look for pelicans, skimmers, kingfishers, thick-knees, storks, martins, swallows, weavers, raptors, canaries, kites, and many grassland specialties. Birds are abundant and we should see a long list of African specialties. Straddling the equator, the Park is also home to an impressive crater lake, expansive grasslands and forests, huge herds of elephant and buffalo, lions, leopards, and diverse small mammals. Overnight at **Mweya Safari Lodge** for 2 nights. *Mweya Lodge has stunning views of Lake Edward, Kazinga Channel and the Rwenzori Mountains as well as excellent birding and photographic opportunities. It is a very comfortable lodge with ensuite bathrooms, restaurant, bar and swimming pool.* (B,L,D)

**Day 9: Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008 ~ Queen Elizabeth National Park**

We will spend a full day on game drives throughout the Park, including a boat cruise along the Kazinga Channel, which links Lakes George and Edward. The birding here is amazingly productive. We may see African Skimmer, Striated Heron, African Spoonbill, Water Thick-knee, Three-banded Plover, Marsh Green, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Gray-headed Gull, Plain Martin, Lesser Swamp-Warbler and Yellow-billed Oxpecker. After dinner, there will be an evening game drive for look for nocturnal birds (look for Slender-tailed and Swamp Nightjars chasing moths around the lodge) and nocturnal wildlife. Overnight at Mweya Safari lodge. (B,L,D)

**Day 10: Feb 18th ~ Kibale National Park** After breakfast, we will have one more game drive, then proceed to Kibale National Park. We check into **Ndali Lodge**, just at the periphery of Kibale National Park for 2 nights. *The Lodge is in a beautiful location between 2 crater lakes. The lodge was built by a British tea farmer and is still managed as a working farm today. The rooms have lovely four poster beds – with mosquito netting – and bathrooms. There is no electricity at this lodge, but lovely candlelight and oil lamps create an “Old Africa” ambiance. Birding right around the lodge is very good.* (B,L,D)

**Day 11: Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 ~ Kibale Forest National Park.**

This enchanting forest is comprised of pristine lowland tropical forest, montane forest, and mixed deciduous forest, as well as some grasslands and swamps. Kibale has some ancient trees up to 180 feet high. We may see the Gray Crowned Crane on the grassland outside the forest here. Forest birds include Grey-winged Robin, Blue-shouldered Robin Chat, Yellow-spotted Barbet, Black-billed Turaco, White-naped Pigeon, Green-breasted Pitta, Red-chested Flufftail, African Pitta, Joyful Greenbul, Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher, White-bellied Crested Flycatcher, Tiny Sunbird, etc. This forest is also home to 12 primate species, including Chimpanzee, Red Colobus, Black and White Colobus, and L’Hoest’s Monkey. We will spend the day hiking (the trails are good here) tracking chimps, and doing some birding, of course. Ndali Lodge (B,L,D)



**Day 12: Feb 20<sup>st</sup>, 2008 ~ Murchison Falls National Park**

Today we will have a panoramic drive to Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda's largest national park. An African savannah habitat, the Park is bisected by the mighty River Nile. It is named for the dramatic Murchison Falls, where the world's longest river explodes through a narrow cleft in the Rift Valley escarpment to plunge into a frothing pool 43m below. We will head towards Budongo forest, with spectacular and varied birdlife. Two overnights at **Masindi Hotel**. *Built in 1923 by The East Africa Railways and Harbors Company. It was the gateway to the 'hinterland of Africa' where produce from the Northern Congo and Southern Sudan found their way to European markets. It is a comfortable hotel with en-suite bathrooms and a short drive to Murchison Falls National Park.* (B,L,D)

**Day 13: Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008 ~ Murchison Falls National Park**

Today we will be start birding the Royal Mile, a stunning forest road lined with spectacular trees where the late Kabalega of Bunyoro Kingdom used to walk during his leisure time. It is rated as one of the premier forest birding sites in Africa. Here we will look for flocks of greenbuls, eremomelas, crombecs, and longbills. Later we will visit the Busingiro Ecotourist Site. The project here was started in 1992 by the Uganda Forest Department and aims to conserve the forest by working closely with the forest edge communities. The project provides local employment; encourages sustainable income generation from the forest for local communities; and runs a Conservation Education program. It is a mosaic of tropical high forest and grassland. A small lake attracts water birds and it is an ideal site for forest bird watching. Overnight at Masindi Hotel. (B,L,D)

**Day 14: Feb 22, 2008 ~ Murchison Falls National Park**

We start early today to bird the Kanio Pabide (Budongo Forest). Special birds here, include: Puvell's Illadopsis, Rufous-sided broadbill, Yellow and Grey Longbills, Rufous-tailed Ant Thrush, White-crested Turaco and Afep Pigeon. After we have had our fill, travel to northern bank of the Nile and check into the **Para Safari Lodge** for two nights. *This historic Lodge enjoys simply astounding views. The now restored Lodge has been host to many dignitaries in its lifetime - Britain's Queen Mother and Ernest Hemingway to name but a few.* (B,L,D)

**Day 15: Feb 23<sup>th</sup>, 2008 ~ Murchison Falls National Park**

Today we will spend the whole day on game drives in the Park. The wildlife along the river is exceptional: hundreds of hippos, large numbers of enormous Nile crocodiles, elephants and vast numbers of birds. We may see one of the greatest rarities of all: the Shoebill. Other key birds here include: Egyptian plover, Red-winged Grey Warbler, Rock Pratincole, Secretarybird, Bat Hawk, Pel's Fishing Owl, White-crested Turaco, Vinaceous Dove, Senegal Thick-Knee, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver, and many more. Overnight at Para Safari Lodge (B,L,D)

**Day 16: Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Cross the River Nile and transfer to Kampala**

We cross the River and visit the top of the falls. Later in the day we will proceed to Kampala and check in to the **Lindsay Cottages**, *located near Kampala on the Entebbe Road. This is the one of the best accommodations around Kampala. Private rooms, Gym, swimming pool and sauna are available.*

**Day 17: Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 ~ Departure from Entebbe Airport in Kimpalu, Uganda**

There will be some time to do some birding in the local botanical gardens and if time allows, visit a chimp sanctuary at Ngamba island.

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## **Mass Audubon naturalist guide: Christopher Leahy**



**Christopher Leahy** currently holds the Gerard A. Bertrand Chair of Natural History and Field Ornithology at Mass Audubon. He has been a professional conservationist for more than thirty years and served as Director of Mass Audubon's Center for Biological Conservation. His interests in natural history are comprehensive, and he is a recognized authority on birds and insects. His published works include *Birdwatcher's Companion to North American Birdlife*, *The First Guide to Insects*, *Introduction to New England Birds*, *An Introduction to Massachusetts Insects*, and *The Nature of Massachusetts*. He is also the editor of a series of authoritative books on the flora and fauna of New England. Chris has designed and led natural history explorations to over 70 countries on all of the continents. He is especially fascinated with the world's great remaining wilderness areas and biodiversity hot spots such as Gabon, Madagascar, and Mongolia.

**Conservation note:** This program provides direct, and vitally important, income to Ugandan guides, drivers, and critical Uganda ecotourism sites. It also supports Mass Audubon's conservation work within Massachusetts.

### **PRICE, TERMS & CONDITIONS OF TRAVEL**

**PRICE:** \$7800 per person, *Singles are very limited and cannot be guaranteed in all locations. Single supplement TBD.*

**Price Includes:** This includes all accommodation, all meals, transport, guiding fees, Gorilla and Chimpanzee permits, park entrance fees, nature walks, boat rides, and bottled water. Extensive Trip Preparation notes, reading list, bird checklist and travel tips. Basic Medical Evacuation coverage is also included.

**Price Excludes:** International airfare, passport and visa fees; Trip cancellation insurance; airport taxes; excess baggage charges; photography and video fees; food and beverages not included in the group meals; gratuities for local guide, items of a personal nature, including alcoholic beverages, laundry and telephone calls; other items not specifically mentioned as included.

**RESERVATIONS, APPLICATIONS, DEPOSITS:** Early reservations are required to ensure your place on this trip. All reservations must be accompanied by a completed reservation form and a **\$1000** deposit. Deposit can be by check or credit card (Visa or MasterCard). In the case of questionable health, we reserve the right to require a physician's certification to affirm you are capable of the activities. Final payment due by 95 days before the departure date. Final payment must be by check.

**RATES:** All tour prices are based on double occupancy. If you would like us to find you a roommate, we will do our best, but cannot guarantee a share (except on certain cruises). If we cannot find a share, you will need to pay the single supplement. All forms and fares are accurate at the time of publication March 2009 but are subject to change at any time prior to departure. It is our policy to only pass on the actual amount of any increases in airfares or land costs such as those increases due to the devaluation of the dollar. A price increase may be called for if the group falls below the minimum of 6. The maximum number of participants is approximately 12.

**FLIGHTS:** **You the traveler are responsible for booking and paying for your own international flights.** Once your deposit and reservation form have been sent to us, we will send you flight and contact information.

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Please be aware that most tickets are non-refundable, therefore you should not book your flight arrangements until you have checked with us to be sure the tour has the minimum number of participants for the trip to go.

**CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS:** If you need to change your booking, you must inform us **immediate**. All cancellations must be done in writing and are effective upon receipt in the Massachusetts Audubon Travel Office. Cancellations received up to 121 days prior to departure will be refunded deposits less a \$300 per person fee. For cancellations between 120 and 90 days prior to departure, all deposits will not be refunded. There are no refunds for cancellations 90 days or less from departure. We strongly urge all travelers to purchase trip cancellation insurance. You will be sent information from the Massachusetts Audubon Society upon receipt of your deposit.

**Your Responsibility:** Travelers should select a trip according to their interest and abilities. Although every precaution is taken to safeguard you and your belongings, group travel trips by their nature involve a certain amount of risk. Trip participants should understand that the domestic and international trips sponsored/operated by Massachusetts Audubon Society (Mass Audubon Tours) - hereafter collectively "M.A.S." - involve known and unknown risks. M.A.S. assumes no responsibility for injuries, death, financial losses or damage to clients' property caused by or occurring during participation in any of the travel trips sponsored/operated by M.A.S. Trip participants must assume responsibility for having sufficient skill and fitness to participate in the trips and activities offered or sponsored by M.A.S. Trip participants must also certify that they have no medical, mental or physical conditions which could interfere with their abilities to participate in the activities and/or trips they are participating in and they must assume and bear the cost of all risks that may be created, directly or indirectly, by any such condition. It is the responsibility of trip participants to have in place adequate insurance to cover any injury, damage or emergency transportation costs related to their travel and/or participation in trip activities and/or to bear the costs of such injury, damage or emergency transportation costs. Because of the risks associated with the travel trips sponsored by M.A.S. we urge all trip participants to supplement their own insurance with travel or vacation or emergency response types of insurance. M.A.S. requires that all trip participants acknowledge and assume these risks by reading and signing an M.A.S. Release and Waiver and Assumption of Risk contract prior to departure.

**CONDITIONS OF TRAVEL:** Travelers will be provided an itinerary and trip preparation information. It is expected that travelers will read this information prior to trip departure. Travelers will be responsible for completing a reservation form, a personal information form, and a release of liability form. Travelers will be expected to abide by the terms set for in the invoice. During the tour, travelers are asked to respect and follow the directions of their guide and leader. The itinerary may be modified in the event of weather, road closures, or unforeseen events.

**TRIP PACE:** This tour is a wildlife and birding safari and therefore will begin early most days. There will sometimes be free time during the middle of the day if a person wants to rest or pursue individual activities. On some days participants may at their option skip some of the birding without missing the remainder. Participants should be capable of spending entire days out birding, walking over uneven terrain, hiking up moderate hills, or steep slopes, and spending more than 7 hours continuously walking. The hikes for the Gorilla's can be long and strenuous and (as true for all wildlife) there is no guarantee that we will see the Gorilla's.



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**Reservation Form for UGANDA ~ February 9 – 25, 2010**

Mr./Mrs./Ms.

**Passenger Name (1) – as shown as passport**

Mr./Mrs./Ms.

**Passenger Name (2) – as shown as passport**

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone: Day

Evening

Email address:

**Accommodations:**

I/We are non-smoker(s) \_\_\_ smoker(s) \_\_\_ (*smoking is limited to outdoors in non-group spaces*)

\_\_\_ I request single accommodations where available and will pay the single supplement.

\_\_\_ I would like to be assigned a roommate. If one is not available, I will pay the single supplement.

**Deposit:**

Please find my enclosed \$1000 **check** \_\_\_\_\_ or **charge** \_\_\_\_\_ my credit card for the deposit:

VISA MC Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable to "Massachusetts Audubon Society"

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

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