UGANDA
Treasure House of Birds and Primates

February 8 – 24, 2015
With Chris Leahy

Uganda has been described as the ‘Pearl of East Africa’ and has been regarded as the most beautiful and biologically rich country in East Africa. From the source of the White Nile on the huge papyrus-fringed Lake Victoria and the snow-capped Rwenzori Range, to the luxuriant forests of the Virunga volcanoes, harboring some of the last remaining Mountain Gorillas, and the extensive savannas around the awe-inspiring Murchison Falls, Uganda is an equatorial country of astonishing contrasts and variety. No other country in Africa can match its amazing diversity of habitats, richness reflected in its bird list of over 1000 species.
Amongst the variety of bird species are many rare and local birds, such as the unique Shoebill and numerous spectacular endemics of the Albertine Rift Valley. All this in a country roughly the size of Oregon.

In addition to its brilliant birding, Uganda offers some of the world’s most exciting mammal watching. The superstar in this category is the endangered Mountain Gorilla, and we will have the rare opportunity to visit a family of these gentle giants in their forest habitat. But we will also search the equatorial forest for chimpanzees – our closest living relative – and many other primates (the Kibale Forest alone contains 13 species). And we will not neglect to spend time with iconic African mammals such as lion, leopard, African Elephant, Cape Buffalo, hippopotamus, and a variety of antelopes.

This tour offers comprehensive coverage of Uganda’s uniquely diverse natural history, with accommodations at some of Africa’s top lodges. At the end of our time here we will take home a long- and very special - list of bird and mammal sightings, and a host of indelible memories from one of the most colorful and diverse countries in Africa.

**D A Y - T O - D A Y I T E R I N A R Y**

**Day 1: February 8, 2015 - Arrival at Entebbe Airport, Kimpalu, Uganda**
Depending on arrival times, we plan to do some birding this afternoon at the Entebbe Botanical Gardens. Situated on the northern shores of Lake Victoria, the gardens are virtually on the Equator, and cover an area of roughly 100 acres. The plantings and natural vegetation here have attracted over 200 species of birds, including Goliath Heron, African Open-billed and Saddle-billed Storks, Allen’s Gallinule, Spur-winged Plover, and many other species of the lakeshore. Apart from these water birds, we are likely to see a nice variety of open country species, such as African Green Pigeon, Blue-headed Coucal, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Crowned Hornbill, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Papyrus Gonolek, and Slender-billed and Golden-backed Weavers. A fine start to our birding adventures! Overnight and meals **Protea Hotel** (Dinner).

**Day 2: February 9, 2015 - Birding Mabamba, Kamengo, and Mpanga forest**
*(Depending on local conditions, we shall choose either the Mabamba or go to Kamengo Makanaga site for our morning birding.)*
After an early breakfast, we’ll set out straightaway to find one of the avian highlights of the tour – the incomparable Shoebill. The Mabamba–Kamengo Wetland about 30 miles west of Entebbe area on the shores of Lake Victoria is one of the few remaining swamps in Uganda protected by the local communities. Its extensive stands of papyrus with its labyrinth of channels and lagoons is classified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) and is home to several pairs of Shoebills, Uganda’s most famous avian resident. This charismatic species, the sole member of its family, is among the most sought-after birds in Africa. We will make a special effort today to find it by paddling through the channels by boat. There will also, of course, be a good selection of classic East African water birds, such as Pink-backed Pelican, African Fish-Eagle, and Malachite Kingfisher, along with more local species such as Long-toed Plover, Papyrus Canary, and Swamp Flycatcher.
In the afternoon we’ll visit the rich and very diverse Mpanga Forest where we will look for the rare Weyn’s Weaver. Mpanga Central Forest Reserve is home to some spectacular trees, including members of the elm family with large buttresses. These are a major food source for Mpanga’s notable variety of butterflies. The forest also boasts of a number of primate species, particularly Red-tailed Monkey, and Black-and-white Colobus Monkey. Not to be overlooked are the many species of forest birds including Ross’ Turaco, Weyn’s Weaver, Grey Parrot, African Wood Owl, Black-and-White Casqued Hornbill, and Red Chested and Klaas’ Cuckoos. Overnight at Serena Hotel, Kampala (B, L, D).

Day 3: February 10, 2015 - Birding en route to Murchison Falls National Park
After breakfast, we’ll drive northwards toward Murchison Falls National Park, birding through the Kaniyo Pabidi section of Budongo, a newly discovered location for the Puvell’s Illadopsis, as well as a good area for others specialties, such as Black-billed Turaco, Narina Trogon, Blue-throated Roller, and Fire-crested Alethe. If the road conditions warrant, we’ll bird along the Butiaba Escarpment a habitat that typically produces Buff-bellied Warbler, Pale Flycatcher, Mocking Cliff-Chat, Beautiful Sunbird, and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, among others.

When we arrive at Murchison Falls National Park, we will begin our exploration of this fabulous place. The park hosts 360 bird species including the rare Shoebill (in case it has so far eluded us) and we’ll have the better portion of two days to bird the variety of habitats here. A few of the many species we’ll look for here are: African Cuckoo-Hawk, Bat Hawk, Black-chested and Banded Snake-Eagles, Bateleur, Red-necked Falcon, Heuglin’s Francolin, African Finfoot, Stanley and Black-bellied Bustards, White-crested Turaco, Spotted and Gray Eagle-Owls, Rwenzori, several species of nightjars, Swallow-tailed and Northern Carmine Bee-eaters, Broad-billed Roller, Red-and-gray Warbler, White-winged Scrub-Warbler, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Blue-throated Wattle-eye, Green-backed, Beautiful, and Copper Sunbirds, Sulphur-breasted and Gray-headed Bushshrikes, Orange Bishop, and Bar-breasted and Black-bellied Firefinches. Overnight at Paraa Safari Lodge (B, L, D). http://www.paraalodge.com/.

Day 4: February 11, 2015 - Full day Murchison Falls National Park
Murchison Falls National Park is Uganda’s largest national park and protects a large section of untamed savannah bisected by the mighty River Nile. It is named for the dramatic Murchison Falls where the world’s longest river explodes violently through a narrow cleft in the Rift Valley escarpment to plunge in a frothing pool 140 feet below. It is one of Uganda’s oldest conservation areas, formed in the early 1900’s. Justifiably famous as Uganda’s premier game park, there are no fewer than 76 mammal species, including lion, elephant, leopard, hippopotamus, Rothschild Giraffe, Cape Buffalo, hartebeest, oribi, warthog, and the Uganda Kob.

After an early breakfast, we will have a morning game drive in the lush Borassus grassland where we should find most of the mammals noted above. After enjoying a packed lunch, we will have an afternoon boat trip to the bottom of the falls. A boat cruise upstream is an unforgettable wildlife experience with views of elephants, hippos, crocodiles, water buffaloes and an abundance of birdlife, including the another excellent chance to see Shoebill. Later this evening, in the areas near the lodge, we will look for the elusive Pennant-winged and Standard-winged Nightjars. Overnight at Paraa Safari Lodge (B, L, D).
**Day 5: February 12, 2015 - Birding to Budongo Forest**

Today begins with another long but fascinating drive, arriving back in the Budongo area late in the afternoon. Depending on the road conditions, one option will be birding through an escarpment known for its panoramic view of Lake Albert and the Rift Valley and with a number of open country bird species such as Brown Snake Eagle, Lesser Blue-eared Starling, White-eared Barbet, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Northern Red Bishop, Grey Headed Bush Shrike, and Zebra Waxbill.

The other option for us will be to go birding through the Kanio Pabide area of Budongo section to look for Puvell’s Illadopsis, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Red-tailed Ant Thrush, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, and Yellow Crested, Brown Backed, and Buff Spotted Woodpeckers.

Budongo forest is the largest natural forested area in East Africa and consists largely of moist, mid-elevation, semi-deciduous forest notable for its enormous mahogany trees. Many of the bird species here have West African affinities, e.g. White-thighed Hornbill, African (Green-breasted) Pitta, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Blue-breasted, Dwarf and Chocolate-backed Kingfishers, Yellow-crested Woodpecker, Yellow-spotted, Hairy-breasted and Yellow-billed Barbets, the elusive Lemon-bellied Crombe, Red-headed Malimbe, and several forest starlings among many others.

We will also be in a prime area for a wide range of primates such as Blue and Red-tailed Monkey, Black-and-white Colobus – and, with luck, Chimpanzees. In addition over 200 butterfly species have been recorded in Budongo. The Masindi Hotel, where we will spend the next two nights, is located in the picturesque and peaceful Masindi town. It is the country’s oldest hostelry and has been restored in its traditional colonial-style architecture. During its long history, it served as a gateway to East African commerce and big game hunters and hosted many famous guests Masindi Hotel (B, L, D).


**Day 6: February 13, 2015 - Full day’s Birding in the Royal Mile**

A short drive from the hotel at dawn takes us to one Uganda's best birding spots, the Royal Mile. The name derives from the area’s historical role as the resort of Uganda's traditional Kings. The forest here has been cut back a few meters along the sides of the main trail, making for particularly good viewing conditions within the forest. Once again we are in habitat more typical of Central and West Africa than of East Africa, so special bird species abound. As we walk quietly along the trail, Red-tailed Ant Thrushes skulk in the shadows, as do Red-tailed Bristle bill, Scaly-breasted, Pale-breasted and Brown Illadopsis, and five or more species of the always challenging greenbuls. Lower down we have a chance for the secretive White-spotted Fluff tail and the striking Nahan's Francolin. Overhead, Sabine's and sometimes Cassin's Spinetails soar over the clearings. With luck and sharp eyes, we may also spot Great Sparrowhawk, Cassin's Hawk-eagle, Crested Guineafowl, White-throated Bee-eater, and Wilcock's Honeyguide. Overnight at Masindi Hotel (B, L, D).

**Day 7: February 14, 2015 - Kibale Forest National Park**

After breakfast we have a drive to Kibale Forest, arriving in the late afternoon. Kibale National Park protects a large block of rainforest that offers both excellent birding and is widely known as the best safari destination for Chimpanzee tracking in East Africa.

The park also boasts 325 bird species, including six which are endemic to the Albertine Rift region: Black capped and Collared Apalis, Blue-headed and Purple-headed Sunbirds, Dusky Crimsonwing, and Red-faced Woodland Warbler. Other species we will look for include Yellowbill (aka Blue Malkoha), Black-billed Turacco, White-headed Wood Hoopoe, Velvet-mantled Drongo, Petit's Cuckoo-Shrike, Joyful...

Day 8: February 15, 2015 - Chimpanzee tracking in the Kibale Park forest
After an early breakfast, we return to the Kibale Park Visitor Center for a briefing about Chimpanzees and chimp tracking. This is the home of Uganda’s largest population of this endangered primate. In addition, the park probably has the greatest variety and concentration of primates found anywhere in East Africa, with 12 other primate species including the rare L’Hoest’s monkey, East Africa’s largest population of the threatened Red Colobus monkey, Grey-cheeked Mangabey, and Olive Baboon. We will spend the morning hours focusing on finding and observing these rare primates. The trails are well-maintained, have gentle sloping hills, and we will go at a “birders pace.”

After lunch we will continue to explore the forest. Superb birds and primates, combined with easy access and excellent infrastructure makes a second full day visit to Kibale more than worthwhile. Overnight at Ndali Lodge (B, L, D).

Days 9&10, February 16-17 - Birding and Game Drive at Queen Elizabeth National Park
Today, we shall start early after breakfast and drive to Queen Elizabeth National Park. The park, named after Queen Elizabeth who visited in 1954, is the second largest national park in Uganda, and ranks highest with respect to overall diversity, with a bird species list exceeding 600 and a day record of 296 bird species. The park has a mosaic of habitats from moist forest at Maramagambo to wild savannah excellent for lion, leopard, elephant, hyena, Ugandan Kob, Side-striped Jackal, baboon, and Giant Hogs, just to name a few.

In addition to game drives we’ll take a boat trip on the Kazinga Channel – sure to be a highlight. This trip is one of the better places to look for African Skimmers, as well as any other African waterbirds we may have missed such as Yellow-billed Stork, African Spoonbill, Egyptian Goose, Black Crane, African Jacana, Kittlitz’s and Three-banded Plovers, Greater and Lesser Swamp Warblers, and Carruthers’s Cisticola.

Elsewhere in the park during our stay we will look for the likes of Brown-chested Plover, Black Bee-eater, Shining Blue Kingfisher, up to five species of vultures, Martial and Long-crested Eagles, Common Scimitarbill, Trilling, Winding, Stout, and Zitting Cisticolas, Black-headed Gonolek, Red-shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike, Violet-backed Starling, Purple-banded Sunbirds, Compact Weaver, Green-winged Pytilia, Golden-breasted Bunting, and many others. Overnight at Mweya Safari Lodge (B, L, D).

Day 11: February 18, 2015 - Transfer to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
Continuing southward this morning toward Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, we will pass through the southern extremity of Queen Elizabeth National Park, where there is a chance of encountering tree-climbing Lions in the Ishasha sector. We will carry a packed lunch to enjoy on the way. February is usually dry, which increases our chances of finding the cats up in the trees.

Bwindi National Park’s claim to ornithological fame is that it contains at least 23 of the 41 highly localized Albertine Rift endemics, including: Grauer's Warbler, Montane Masked Apalis, Red-throated Alethe,

**Day 12: February 19, 2015 - Gorilla Tracking in the Forest**

On this day, we set off early with packed lunch, to the park headquarters for a briefing prior to Gorilla Tracking. This is one of the most exciting lifetime experiences of all time. The gorillas are gentle animals and it is an unforgettable experience to watch them as they play and go about their daily activities. Each encounter is different and has its own rewards; you are likely to enjoy the close view of adults feeding, grooming, and resting as the youngsters frolic and swing playfully from vines. On the trail, we will also look for other primates like L’ Hoest Monkey, Blue Monkey, and Black-and-white Colobus. Other possible mammals include Rwenzori Duiker, Yellow-back Duiker, and Caruthers Bohm’s and Alexander Squirrels.

**Note:** Today’s hike can take from 1 to 8 hours under varying trail conditions depending on where the Gorillas happen to be on the day of our visit. Good physical condition and the ability to hike for up 8 hours on hilly terrain is required. Overnight at Gorilla Forest Camp (B, L, D).

**Day 13: February 20, 2015 - Full day birding on the Main Trail**

Bwindi is largely at a higher altitude and therefore is cooler than the other localities we have visited on the tour. Temperatures range between 50 and 65 degrees Fahrenheit. This means that today’s species will include some highland species as well as some of the Albertine Rift endemics we may have missed and better views of Uganda’s many spectacular birds. The following are just a few of the day’s possibilities to check out in your field guide: Black-faced Rufous Warbler, Mountain Masked Apalis Dusky Blue Flycatcher, Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher, Northern Double-collared Sunbird, Doherty's Bush-shrike, White-naped Raven, Montane Oriole, Waller's Starling, Black-billed Weaver, African Green Broadbill, Oriole Finch, Bar-tailed Trogon, Tullberg's Woodpecker, Lagdens Bush Shrike, and Archer's Ground Robin. Overnight at Gorilla Forest Camp (B, L, D).

**Day 14: February 21, 2015 - To Lake Mbuuro National Park**

After breakfast we will transfer to Lake Mbuuro, arriving in the late evening. Lake Mbuuro National Park encompasses more than 100 sq. miles and has a markedly different fauna from the other reserves we have visited. We will have 2 days here to explore the rolling hills and open grassy valleys. The park is covered in extensive open and wooded acacia savannah, home to Eland, the largest of the antelopes, as well as Topi, Impala, Klipspringer, Burchell’s Zebra and a number of several acacia associated birds. Overnight at Mantana Luxury Tented Camp (B, L, D). [http://www.kimbla-mantanauganda.com/index_Page344.htm](http://www.kimbla-mantanauganda.com/index_Page344.htm)

**Day 15: February 22, 2015 - Birding in Lake Mbuuro National Park**

We start the day with an early morning game drive, with good chances of viewing several animal species including zebras, impalas, elands, topi and buffalos. Following lunch, our game viewing will be by boat, looking for hippos, crocodiles, and a variety of water birds like the Great White Egret, Pied Kingfisher,
and brilliantly colored Papyrus Gonolek, Papyrus Yellow Warblers, African Fin foot, Fish eagle, Night Heron, and many more. Overnight at Mantana Luxury Tented Camp (B, L, D).

Day 16: February 23, 2015 - Game drive and Transfer to Entebbe
After breakfast we will do another game drive in the park. Have lunch at the Lodge and proceed to Entebbe. We may have an opportunity to bird in the Botanical Gardens and Entebbe surrounding areas. Stay at Protea Hotel, or depart on evening flight. (B, L, D).

Day 17: February 24, 2015 - (alternative Departure Day – depending on flights)

About Your Mass Audubon Guide: Chris 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 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, with extensive experience throughout the African continent. He is especially fascinated with the world's great remaining wilderness areas and biodiversity hot spots such as Gabon, Madagascar, and Mongolia. He grew up in Marblehead and has lived in Gloucester with his family since the 1970s.

About Your Uganda Guide: Herbert Byaruhanga

Herbert Byaruhanga is Managing Director of Bird Uganda Safaris, LTD and one of Uganda’s most distinguished tour guides. His company offers a variety of birding and wildlife tours of the most naturally resplendent regions of Uganda and Rwanda. Herbert is affectionately known as “Papa,” or father of tourism, in Uganda. He has dedicated himself to building the professional tourism capacity of his home country and is the leading trainer for tourist guides in Uganda and Rwanda. He is the Founder of: Uganda Safari Guides Association, Uganda Bird Guides Club, Uganda Cultural Guides Club, and leads the organizing committee of the East African Tourist Guides Associations. He is actively developing conservation-minded youth through Uganda’s Young Birder Club, and is a regional ambassador to the Global Birding Initiative’s “Pledge to Fledge” campaign. Herbert holds a B. A. in Tourism Management from Makerere University, Kampala. He holds a high diploma in Tourism and certificates in Tour Guiding and Advanced Motoring.
PRICE, TERMS & CONDITIONS

$10, 500- based on double occupancy; single supplement is $1800. This cost is based on a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 12 travelers, plus leaders. If there are less than 10 travelers, the tour price will increase by $1000.

Price Includes:
- All accommodations and meals as noted in itinerary
- Ground transportation
- Local guides and tour managers and Mass Audubon leader, Chris Leahy
- Park and preserve entrance fees, boat trips as described
- Gratuities for local drivers, guides, hotel staff, porters
- Medical evacuation insurance

Does Not Include:
- Flights from your home to Uganda
- Passport and visa fees
- Alcoholic beverages
- Extra transportation costs not included in the itinerary
- Special gratuities
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

FLIGHTS: You, the traveler, are responsible for booking and paying for your own international flights. Once you reserve your space, we will provide you with suggested flights and tell you which flights our leaders will take. You may book flights directly with the airline, online, or with a travel agent. 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. We ask that you provide us with your flight details so we can be sure to meet you at the airport upon your arrival.

APPLICATIONS, RESERVATIONS, DEPOSITS: Early applications are strongly encouraged. Trip rosters usually must be finalized 4 months before departure! All applications must be accompanied by a completed reservation form and a $1000 deposit. Deposits can be by check or credit card (Visa or MasterCard). We reserve the right to decline your application. 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 is due 90 days before the departure date. Final payment must be by check or money order.

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. 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 in March 2014 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. Rarely, a price increase may be called for if the group falls below the minimum, as listed in the itinerary.
PHOTOS: Mass Audubon reserves the right to make use of any photograph taken on the tour. We guarantee that no photos of a comprising nature will be used. If you have questions or concerns, please contact us.

TRIP INSURANCE: A brochure and application for optional trip cancellation, illness and baggage insurance will be sent to you upon registrations. We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself. Mass Audubon does provide Medical Evacuation Coverage as part of the tour price. Medevac200 brochure will be sent to you in advance.

CANCELLATION Policy: If you need to change your booking, you must inform us immediately in writing. 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: 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 with 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 an application reservation form, including the personal information and a release of liability. 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. This trip will be in very remote areas, far from medical care. There may be challenging hikes and there will be long days of driving and birding.
Reservation Form: Uganda 2015

Passenger 1 Name as shown on passport: ______________________________________________________
Nickname for Name tag: __________________________ Date of Birth: ______________________________

Passenger 2 Name as shown on passport: ______________________________________________________
Nickname for Name tag: __________________________ Date of Birth: ______________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________________
City: ______________________________________ State:________ Zip:_____________________
Phone: Home:____________________ Work: _______________ Cell:_____________________
Email address:_____________________________________________________________________

Room Preferences:
_____ 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.

Personal Information:
___I/We are non-smokers. (If you are a smoker(s), please check here___ and note that smoking is limited to
outdoors in non-group spaces)
___Is there anything Mass Audubon should know about your health that might impact your ability to participate
comfortably on this trips? Please describe: ___________________________________________________

Deposit:
_____ Please find my enclosed check deposit of $1000 per person: Checks should be made payable to
“Massachusetts Audubon Society” OR _____ Please charge my credit card:
VISA MC Card # __________________________ Exp.________________
________________________________________________________
Signature