

Liuwa Plain

November 2025



Dates:

From Lusaka: Saturday 8 – Sunday 16 November 2025 (9 days / 8 nights)

Only Liuwa Plain (self-drive): Monday 10 – Saturday 15 November 2025 (6 days / 5 nights)

Guides: One or two of our expert birding guides (Frank Willems, Wouter van Spijker and Leslie Reynolds)

Number of people: Minimum 4, maximum 12

Package type: Birds & Wildlife guided safari: *the tour is a balanced mix of birding and wildlife watching, in an area with abundant megafauna and other wildlife.*

Accommodation type: Lodging (2 and 3-star). Camping option available.



**BIRDING
ZAMBIA**

Introduction

Mid November is the prime time to visit Liuwa Plain National Park in Zambia's Western Province. The early rains have turned the vast sandy plains in a flower-rich carpet of shades of green, red and pink. It is perfectly timed to see the huge herds of wildebeest, for which this is calving season, and other large mammals. Among huge bird numbers that congregate in early November is almost the global population of Black-winged Pratincole.



Liuwa Plain National Park (366,000 ha) is bound to become one of Africa's best-known parks. The photogenic open grasslands, dotted with pans and filled with large mammals and birds, are simply spectacular. Since African Parks took on the management of the park in 2004, visitor numbers are steadily growing. The Wildebeest number over 50,000 by now, rapidly recovering from decades of neglect, representing the 2nd largest Wildebeest migration in Africa. Large herds congregate in the central plains in November. Zebra numbers in the thousands as well, while Buffalo, Red Lechwe and Tsessebe are among large mammals seen in variable numbers. Oribi and Steinbuck are amazingly common.

All Zambian large predators are present in the area, following the wildebeests in their tracks. Spotted Hyena is very common throughout the system, with a population in the hundreds. Lion, Wild Dog and Cheetah reside in the plains in growing numbers and are regularly encountered. Among the many smaller carnivores, Selous's Mongoose, Meller's Mongoose, African Wild Cat and Striped Weasel are maybe of most interest.



The area is among the most important in the world for Wattled and Grey Crowned Crane which are commonly seen in large flocks. The wader watching here is among the best in Zambia, with great numbers and variety. Pelicans and various duck species might occur in large numbers.

A little-known wildlife spectacle is the vast numbers of the rare Black-winged Pratincole. Almost the whole world population, some 150-200,000 birds, stage in the area in October – November. It is likely we will see clouds of many thousands.

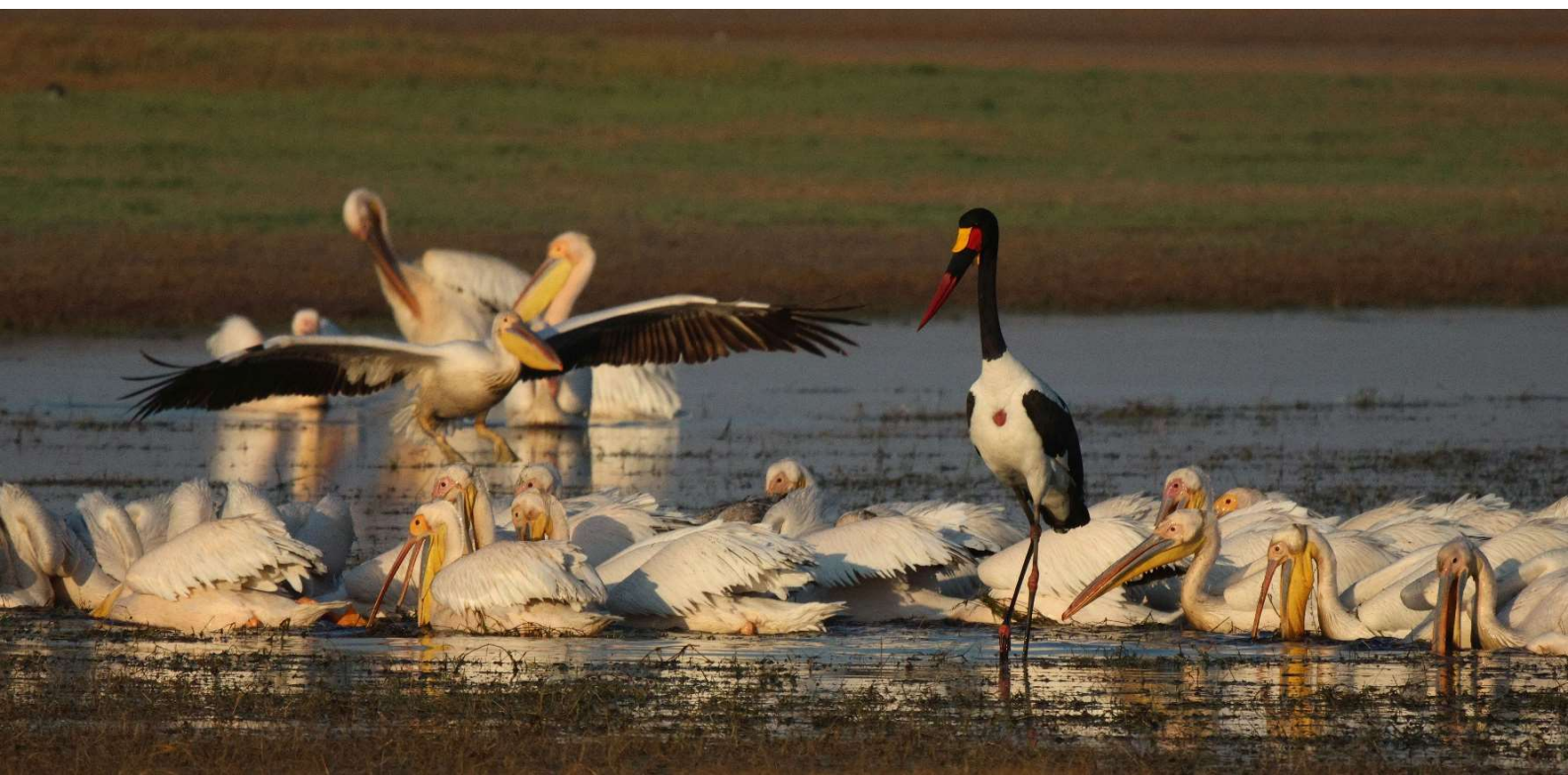


Of global importance are also the numbers of migratory Caspian Plover which is abundant in November. Other characteristic waders include Pied Avocet and a range of migrant waders, including regularly scarce species like Curlew or Black-tailed Godwit. The attractive White-bellied Bustard is among several bustard species and is commonly seen. Raptors are everywhere including the characteristic Secretarybird (largest population in Zambia) and Greater Kestrel. We expect to see excellent numbers of White-backed, Lappet-faced, Hooded and White-headed Vultures, together with other scavengers like Bateleur and Tawny Eagle. Red-footed Falcon and Amur Falcon both occur. We may get lucky finding Red-necked Buzzard, a species only recorded three times in Zambia to date, with all records coming from Liuwa Plain.



Several races of passerines are endemic to the area, notably the local forms of Clapper and Pink-billed Larks. These occur alongside other characteristic larks including Grey-backed Sparrow-lark and Fawn-coloured Lark, both of which are uncommon elsewhere in Zambia. Swamp and Rufous-cheeked Nightjar are of interest. Flamboyant Long-tailed Widows display above wetter sections of the grasslands.

The timing is excellent also to come across some of Liuwa's fascinating amphibians and reptiles, such as the endemic, recently described Bullfrog species and Anchieta's Cobra.



Detailed program

The itinerary starts and ends in Lusaka, with vehicle transfer to and from Liuwa. You are also welcome to join on a self-drive basis, for the full length of the package or the days in Liuwa only.

Day 1: Saturday 8 November

Pickup from Lusaka International Airport. A 3-hour drive takes us to the town of Mumbwa where we will stay in chalets in the Excellent Guesthouse.

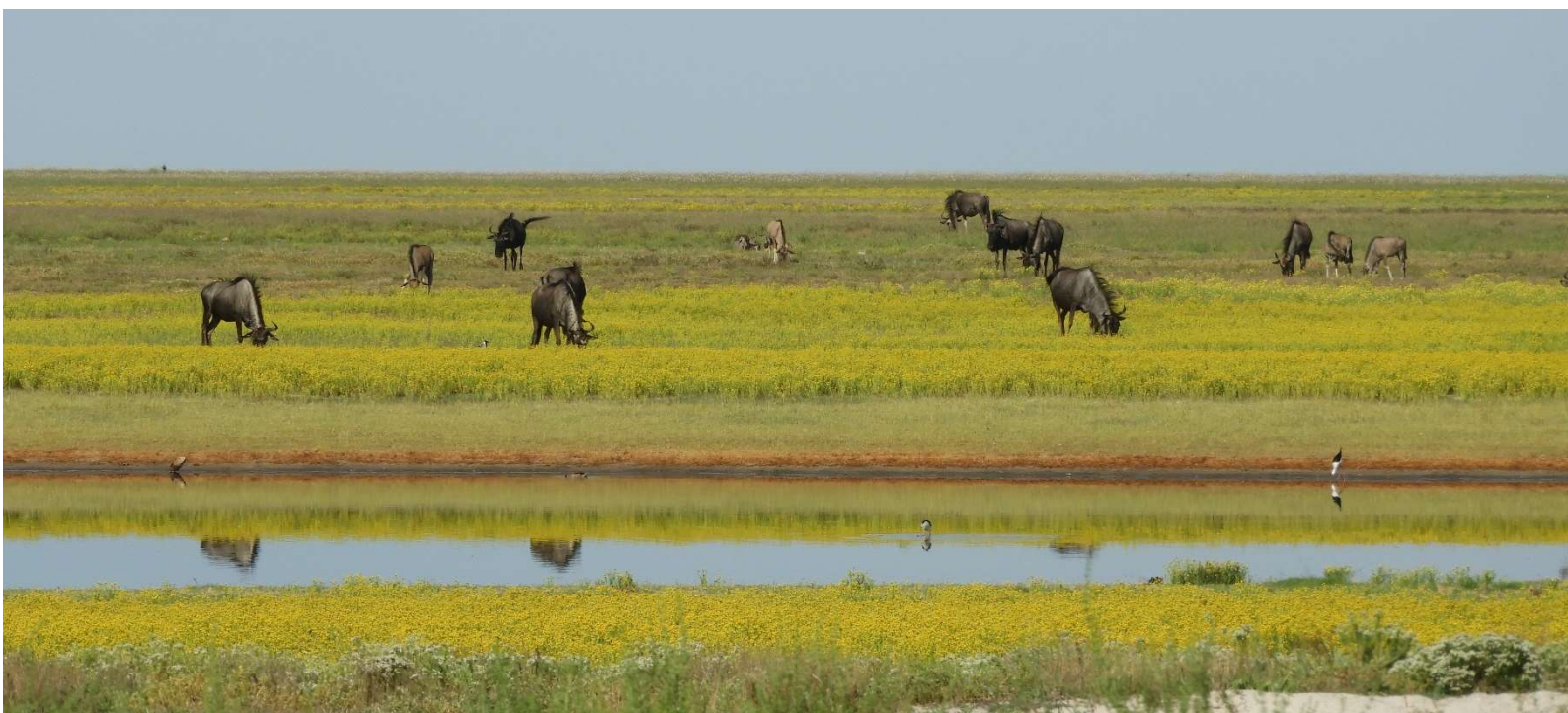
Day 2: Sunday 9 November

Early start so that you will have ample time to watch for birds and mammals along the road through the vast Kafue National Park. Puku, Impala, Warthog and Kinda Baboon are among common mammals here. Elephant, Hartebeest and Sable antelope are often seen as well. Large carnivores like Lion and Leopard are common but require more luck to see. The interesting birdlife includes Wattled and Grey Crowned Crane, Saddle-billed Stork and a range of raptors.

Total driving time from Mumbwa to Mongu is about 5 hours. You will arrive in good time at the comfortable Liseli Lodge.

Day 3: Monday 10 November

Early morning transfer to the Liuwa Plain National Park. The route goes through the vast Barotse Floodplains. This floodplain complex is among the biggest such systems in the world, covering thousands of square kilometers. Internationally important waterbird concentrations occur here, with Openbill Stork, African Skimmer and many herons occurring in large numbers. Lesser Black-backed Gull surprisingly occurs year-round and may be seen from the main bridge with luck. It is also here that the famous Kuomboka Ceremony takes place.



Via the recently constructed bridges over the Zambezi and the Luanginga, we will enter the Liuwa system. It is a pleasant 1-2 hour drive to our base for the coming days, Katoyana Camp. This comfortable camp has 4 spacious luxury tented units plus space for additional tents.

Day 4 - 7: Tuesday 11 – Friday 14 November

We will have four full days to fully explore the Liuwa Plain National Park. Katoyana is strategically located in the eastern part of the central plains where the vast wildebeest and zebra herds tend to congregate at this time of year, followed in their footsteps by the large carnivores, vultures and other scavengers. We will explore the vast plains, the many pools and the Matamanene Stream system in search of birds, mammals and other wildlife. We will return each day to the camp to enjoy the top cuisine prepared by our team and a campfire under the stars.

Day 8: Saturday 15 November

Early start, enjoying the southern section of the Liuwa Plain and Barotse Floodplains on our way out. We will push up to Mumbwa, a drive of some 8 hours from Kalabo.

Day 9: Sunday 16 November

Return to Lusaka. The airport is a 3-hour drive from Mumbwa.



Package price

9-day package, fully inclusive including transport from/to Lusaka. Accommodation at Katoyana Tented Camp

Zambian / African citizens / residents	\$3,199
International	\$3,999
Single supplement 25%	

6-day package, self-drive. Accommodation at Katoyana Tented Camp

Zambian / African citizens / residents	\$2,049
International	\$2,559
Single supplement 25%	

6-day package, self-drive & camping with own gear at Katoyana Campsites

Zambian / African citizens / residents	\$1,699
International	\$2,124
No single supplement	

Included are all guiding services, catering, tea & coffee, accommodation. Excluded are park fees (per person per night \$40 international / \$20 African resident / K30 Zambian citizen, \$15 / \$7 for international/local vehicle), drinks and items of a personal nature. The rate applies to BirdWatch Zambia members only. Non-members pay an additional \$25 with which comes BWZ membership for 2025 and 2026. For each booking, donations will be made to BirdWatch Zambia and the Mwinilunga Conservation Project.

Please enquire about our back-to-back extension to Minyanya Plain and the Lochinvar, Pitta & endemics tour.

