

This forms part of a longer trip starting in Uganda and then moving into the Bukoba area of Tanzania before returning via Rwanda to Uganda and home. June 2010.

International flights with KLM from MAN-AMS-EBB were excellent.

Overall everything worked very well and to a good timetable. We paced our journey of 31 days to leave time at each destination to enjoy the area and not be continuously moving on. I have always thought this aspect important and as we get older it is more so. Far better in my opinion to miss some destination out altogether and thus get more quality time at the places you can visit than to dash around seeing little and going home frustrated and tired. There is always another chance to return (fingers crossed). *Ed. Very true I have been back to Uganda 5 times since and I am booked to go back again.in 2020*

We had planned the itinerary ourselves to cover areas we wished to visit either for the first time or to revisit favourites. Our journey commenced and finished in Entebbe (Uganda) and covered the small area of Tanzania around Minziro Forest, Bukoba and Rubondo Island NP before driving into Rwanda for 8 days in an attempt to see what else that country had to offer apart from Gorillas.

Most Ground arrangements were competently handled by our friends at Churchill and we had made a direct booking with our driver, guide and friend Emmy Gongo.

Car. The Land Cruiser proved very reliable and the only problems were punctures which is not unexpected. Inside the car was comfortable for up to three people plus driver but I would not like to carry more on a long trip. Thankfully this model was without the silly 'rainguards' on the window which serve no purpose other than to obscure the view. We did have a long delay at the Ug/TZ border post due to what they say was a missing document. I have not seen this before and think the man was being very pedantic. However the problem was resolved and we do not blame Churchill. A point to watch in future though.

The trip covered three countries in part so this report will deal only with Uganda.

UGANDA. Entebbe was our port of arrival on 25th May 2010 and Luggage and Visa were no problem as usual. We were met by Emmy at the airport and spent our first night in a private house as guests of a friend.

Next day we set off west on the first leg of our journey to Lake Nabugabo just outside Masaka. Our lodgings were at the

Sand Beach Resort which we found easily enough.



The place was rural and quiet with nice views over the lake. Our cottages looked relatively new, indeed

two more were being built. We had the company of **Ether and Heaven's Angel** for our stay here. Food was adequate and simple. There are activities here but we simply went for walks and a boat trip on the Lake. We had to pay for petrol and as the boatman shortchanged us we actually ran dry on the return leg.



Fortunately the destination was down wind so we just sat still until hitting the shore near the Lodge. On the walk back we found a rare bird (**Forbe's Plover**) see above photo, so serendipity works. We also found a very co-operative Three Striped Chameleon and got some nice pictures.

After two nights here we headed with full fuel tanks for Mutukula and the Tanzanian Frontier.

See separate report on our stay in Tanzania 2010:-

We re-entered Uganda on 11th June at Cyanika and were concerned at how much everything had changed since our last visit in 2004.

Our first stop was at **Nukuringo Safari Lodge**. (**ED. Not to be confused with the excellent Nkuringo Gorilla Lodge**)_Not changed all that much since my first visit in **2003**. There is a road/track off the hill now to the Lodge grounds. The 'Tents' have glass doors now so appear lighter inside when closed off. Our Tent was on a slope so we had to fix the Bed level with bricks. The Toilet flush was broken but fixable (By me.) Food was probably better than last time and the staff cheerful and friendly. They need to address one or two small issues but overall it was nice enough. However the downside is that the whole area has changed, for the worse, in seven years. Forests have been cleared and there is very little in the way of birds away from the Lodge grounds where Greater Sparrowhawks had reared young. I actually see little purpose in this Lodge now other than a place to rest away from Kisoro (30 mins of bad road away).

After three nights there we moved on towards Ruhiza. We had intended to bird Echuyo forest but



massive road works prevented that. We did however 'rescue' a large **Ruwenzori Rhinoceros Chameleon** that was trying to cross the busy Kabale-Kisoro Road. It was quite active and instead of posing on my hand it kept trying to run up my arm and sit on my shoulder.

We also did a side trip of 5 km or so to a swamp in the hills to seek the Papyrus Canary. We failed in that but noticed some very odd looking Weavers that

warrant a closer look. The closest match is Northern Masked but they do not occur in East Africa. We were offered some **Crayfish** from the River and bought a Creel which I knew would come in handy for Dinner.



We arrived at Ruhiza and the lovely **Trekkers Tavern** which was as good if not better than last time. A superb place and now the grounds have matured it is my first choice place to stay. The only downer was the bumpy approach road but Moses and Julius' hospitality more than matched this. Very handy for Ruhiza area and if UWA can get their act

together over Entry Fees a longer stay would be worthwhile. As it is, I think visitors tend to cut down their time to avoid fees each day which is a great shame. However we birded the area, with and without guides, and went down to Mbwindi Swamp where we managed to see the elusive and beautiful Green Broadbill as well as many other birds such as **Montane Masked Apalis** (right) . **Ituri Batis**,(below left) and **Doherty's Bushshrike** (below right) By another of those life's





chances we bumped into our friend "Bushshrike" again and birded with him. Then we moved on down to Buhoma, the road having deteriorated badly or memory is failing.

Gorilla Resort. Again this is one of our favourites. Whilst we were initially disappointed to get a "Cottage" which felt damp and lacked privacy we got moved to our usual Tent for the next



two nights and all was very enjoyable. There was refurbishment work going on during our visit and it is nice to see the level of care being exercised. Fees are a bit Top side at \$500 though. Where do they get these prices from? We were the only guests on two of the three nights of our visit. There are too many beds in Buhoma already so maybe competition will bring changes. We bumped into a local Gorilla Group whilst out walking the forest which was nice. On one day, bored with forests, we took off to Ishasha as a day trip and managed to find Lions and Elephant as a change to birds and monkeys.

Photo right is **Snowy-crowned Robin Chat** in Gorilla Resort grounds.



Then it was a long dusty drive to Lake Mburo National park where once more we lodged at the excellent **Mihingo Lodge.** We have stayed there before and love the chalet and its balcony etc. The space is enormous and the food excellent. We had no complaints at all. However it is a long way from the central area and this is a drawback unless you partake of the 'activities' on offer at the Lodge such as Horseriding and Quadbiking (Ugh!).

We took a boat trip and walking safari with an excellent Ranger/Scout named Moses. Do ask for him if birds are your hobby as he is the only Ranger with this interest. With his help we found several notable birds such as ShoeBill, **Whitebacked Night Heron**, Finfoot of course and my first Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher. An overstaying **Barred Warbler** and a loving pair of **Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds** made other noteworthy appearances on the check list.



Then it was off back to Entebbe to Entebbe with a call in to Churchill for debrief. Emmy was not done with us and took us to the Botanical Gardens for nice views of African Grey Parrot, African Hobby and Pied Hornbill.

My final check list total for the wile trip hit 424.

All in all an excellent four weeks which went very well with only minor hitches.

Lodges visited are reviewed.

The flight home with KLM was an anti climax and on time.