

Shoebills, Sunbirds & Serenity

A Birder's Guide to Uganda's Premier Birding Destination

1st Edition

A publication of Avian Conservation Uganda Society 2024



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Madagascar Bee-eater



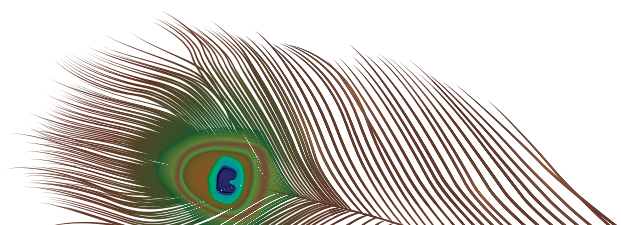
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Creating this Trail Guide has been a collaborative effort, and we are grateful to all those who contributed their time, expertise, and resources to bring this project to fruition. The guide was created through a partnership between Park Shoebill and the Avian Conservation Uganda Society, and we extend our gratitude to all contributors.

We thank the Avian Conservation Uganda Society (ACUS) staff, especially Joshua Mukama Rwakamani and Elasmus Godfrey Tumwesigye for imagining this publication. Fundamentally, Park Shoebill must be applauded for exemplifying the requisite stewardship of local biodiversity assets that more private sector actors must emulate. Joseph Kiiza and Liliane Ndiho have been instrumental in bringing this guide to life. We also thank Park Shoebill staff, especially Mushaija Jackson for their unwavering dedication to coordinating the necessary tours, providing logistical support and morale-boosting during the execution of this work.

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A Win-Win for Birds and Tourists.

Mapping trail guides is a vital tool for bird conservation, offering benefits like habitat protection, species monitoring, and increased public engagement that fosters advocacy for conservation initiatives. Trail mapping is a valuable tool that can significantly enhance tourism experiences and contribute to bird conservation efforts. Mapping tour trails increases accessibility, broadening the appeal of destinations to a wider range of tourists, including those with varying fitness levels or disabilities

The Avian Conservation Uganda Society recognises how eco-tourism in the Mabamba and Mkanaga wetlands profoundly contributes to highlighting the ecological significance of the area. The wetland is a critical habitat for resident and migratory birds which attract visitors interested in sustainable and responsible travel, that trickles down to local communities and supports conservation efforts. Well-mapped trails with clear directions and information make it easier for tourists to navigate and explore natural areas, leading to a more enjoyable and informative experience. This can attract more visitors and encourage them to stay longer, boosting tourism revenue vital to support actions and initiatives aimed at safeguarding this Important Bird Area.

Why A Trail Guide?



White-faced Whistling Ducks & Yellow-billed Ducks

Mapping trail guides is a vital tool for bird conservation, offering benefits like habitat protection, species monitoring, and increased public engagement that fosters advocacy for conservation initiatives. Trail mapping is a valuable tool that can significantly enhance tourism experiences and contribute to bird conservation efforts. Mapping tour trails increases accessibility, broadening the appeal of destinations to a wider range of tourists, including those with varying fitness levels or disabilities

This guide is part of phase one of a partnership scheme between Park Shoebill and Avian Conservation Uganda Society to promote avian conservation within the Mabamba wetland ecosystem by contributing to knowledge transfer, tourism promotion, and triggering environmental stewardship in local communities. This guide serves as an educational tool for raising awareness about bird species, habitats, and conservation. Well-mapped trails and detailed bird sighting information enhance the tourism experience and attract visitors who generate revenue for conservation and community development. The project can create jobs for local guides and staff, providing economic opportunities and encouraging community involvement in conservation. It also promotes ethical birding practices, shifting public attitudes towards birds, especially among young people

PLANNING

Use the guide to plan your route and identify key spots for birdwatching.
Contact Park Shoebill for booking

FORMAT

Use the guide to plan your route and identify key spots for birdwatching.
Contact Park Shoebill for booking

FOCUS

This trail guide focuses on Bussi Island, the Mabamba and Makanaga Wetlands. It provides information on the different trails in the area, the bird species that can be seen, and the importance of bird conservation.

FORMAT

The main objective of this trail guide is to promote avian conservation within the Mabamba wetland ecosystem by contributing to knowledge transfer, tourism promotion, and triggering environmental stewardship.

Using The Trail Guide



● Planning

Use the guide to plan your route and identify key spots for birdwatching.



● Observation

Refer to the guide for expected sightings & habitat information.



● Education

Learn about the importance of bird conservation and the local ecosystem



● Grow, harvest, and brew for a cause

Integrate bird-friendly practices into your coffee



The Value Of Birding

Conservation of Bird Populations

Birdwatching helps monitor bird populations and identify species at risk. This data informs conservation strategies and allows for targeted efforts to protect endangered species and their habitats.

Preservation of Habitats

Birdwatchers often advocate for protecting important bird habitats. This can lead to the establishment of protected areas, and the implementation of sustainable land-use practices that benefit a wide range of wildlife.

Economic Benefits

Birding tourism generates revenue through park fees, guided tours, accommodations, and other services. This income can be invested in conservation efforts and community development projects, providing economic incentives for habitat preservation.

Education and Awareness

Birding tourism generates revenue through park fees, guided tours, accommodations, and other services. This income can be invested in conservation efforts and community development projects, providing economic incentives for habitat preservation.

Scientific Research

Birdwatchers contribute valuable data to scientific research on bird behaviour, migration patterns, and population dynamics. This information is crucial for understanding and addressing the threats facing bird populations.

Psychological Benefits

Birdwatching has been shown to have several positive psychological benefits, including stress reduction, improved mood, enhanced cognitive function, and a sense of accomplishment.

Aesthetic Benefits:

Birdwatching offers aesthetic benefits by allowing people to appreciate the beauty of birds, connect with nature, and find inspiration for art and creativity. Observing birds' colours, patterns, behaviours, and songs can be a deeply moving experience. Birdwatching encourages a deeper connection with nature and fosters appreciation for the ecosystems that support birdlife. The beauty and diversity of birds have inspired countless works of art, literature, and music, and birdwatching can spark creativity and inspire artistic expression.

Birding in Uganda's biggest wetland



Little Egret



Long-toed Lapwing



Malachite Kingfisher



Splendid Starling



Squacco Heron

Birding Ethics

1. Respect Wildlife: Maintain a safe distance from birds and their habitats.
2. Minimise Disturbance: Avoid loud noises and sudden movements.
3. Stay on Trails: Follow designated paths to protect the ecosystem.
4. No Littering: Carry out all waste to preserve the natural environment.

Visitors should avoid making loud noises and using bright lights, as this can also disturb the birds.



Recommended Equipment

Binoculars:

Essential for bird spotting.

Camera:

For capturing sightings.

Field Guide book:

A book or app to identify bird species.

Notebook:

For recording observations.

Water and Snacks:

Stay hydrated and energised.

Laser pointer

Telescope



Safety Gear

- Comfortable Footwear
- Weather-Appropriate Clothing (Hat, rain coat and more)
- First Aid Kit
- Insect Repellent

The Significance Of The Ecosystem

The Mabamba and Makanaga wetlands are not only crucial for local biodiversity and economic stability but also hold global significance as a Ramsar site and an Important Bird Area. These wetlands provide invaluable ecosystem services, including water supply, fishing, carbon storage, and tourism opportunities, contributing to local livelihoods and global climate change mitigation estimated to have a value of over UGX 3 BN and attracting at least 2000 birdwatchers annually. Therefore, investing in trail guide mapping is an investment in preserving these essential ecosystems and the rich biodiversity they support.



Hadada Ibis

This Mabamba Bay ecosystem supports a large area stretching into Wakiso and Mpigi districts. The ecosystem is a mosaic of habitats, including wetlands, grasslands, and forests. These habitats provide a home for a variety of plants and animals, including over 300 species of birds, a variety of aquatic plants and animals, including frogs, turtles, and fish. The grasslands are home to a variety of grasses and wildflowers, as well as small mammals and reptiles. The forests are home to a variety of trees, shrubs, and vines, as well as a variety of birds and mammals.

Habitat Characteristics

● Dense Vegetation

The forests on Bussi Island are characterized by dense vegetation, including a mix of indigenous trees, shrubs, and undergrowth. This dense cover provides ideal nesting and foraging grounds for various bird species. The vegetation structure ranges from tall canopy trees to lower shrubs, creating multiple layers of habitat that support different bird species with varying habitat preferences.

● Food Availability:

The forests offer a rich supply of food resources, including insects, fruits, seeds, and nectar. Insectivorous birds benefit from the abundance of insect prey, while frugivorous and nectarivorous birds exploit the fruits and flowers. Seasonal variations in food availability ensure that different bird species can find resources throughout the year, supporting a stable bird population.

● Water Bodies and Wetlands

Proximity to the Mabamba wetland on L. Victoria ensures that water sources are readily available. The presence of swamps, marshes, and small water bodies within the forested areas enhances habitat diversity.

These wetlands are particularly important for water-dependent bird species, providing breeding sites and feeding grounds.

● Shelter and Nesting Sites:

The variety of trees and plants provides numerous nesting sites, from canopy nests to ground-level shelters. Cavities in older trees, dense foliage, and thorny bushes offer protection from predators and harsh weather conditions.

Birds such as woodpeckers, barbets, and hornbills use tree cavities, while smaller species like warblers and flycatchers build intricate nests in the undergrowth.

Bird Species Diversity



Intermediate Egret

Notable mentions.

Resident Birds

Birds that stay throughout the year.

Pied Kingfisher
Long-tailed Comorant
African Jacana
Black Crakes

Migrant Birds

Grey-headed Gulls
White-winged Terns
European Bee-eater
Yellow Wagtail
Eurasian Marsh Harrier

Endangered Birds

Shoebill
Blue Swallow
Gray-crowned Crane
(Crested Crane)



Gray tit-Flycatcher

The Iconic Mabamba Wetlands



No birding journey is complete without exploring the Mabamba Wetlands, famous for its extensive papyrus swamps and as a prime Shoebill habitat. This trail is a highlight for any birdwatcher visiting Uganda.



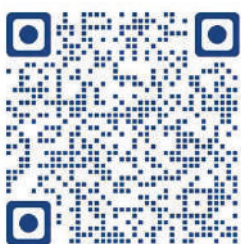
Trail Highlights

Shoebill, African Jacana, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, African Pygmy Kingfisher, Malachite Kingfisher, Blue-headed Coucal, Dwarf Bittern



Exploration

visitors may explore the Mabamba trail by boat using expert guides from Park Shoebill. Visitors may choose to walk or bike through the island to the landing site

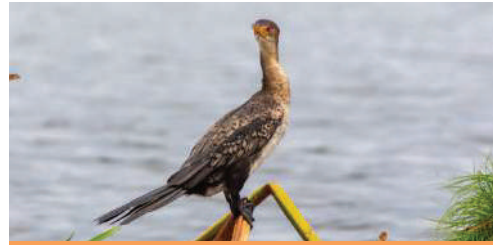


Habitat

Observe species uniquely adapted to wetland habitats, forests and open woodland.



Long-toed Lapwing



Long-tailed Cormorant



African Jacana



Shoebill



Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird



African Green Pigeon

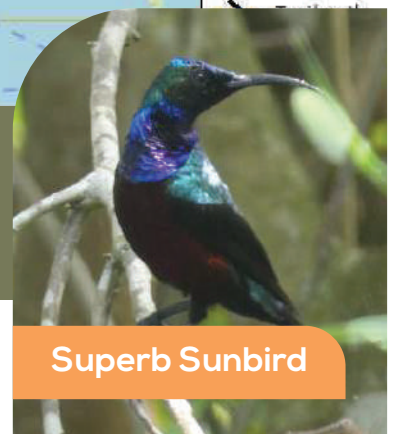


Pied Kingfisher

MAKANAGA WETLAND: A BIRDWATCHER'S DREAM



The Mekanaga Wetlands are renowned for their rich biodiversity and tranquil beauty. The trails here meander through marshes and reed beds, offering prime opportunities to spot rare waterbirds.



Superb Sunbird

Trail Highlights

- **White-backed Night Heron:**

Imagine a bird cloaked in mystery and elegance that thrives in the twilight hours when the world is bathed in the soft glow of the setting sun. The White-backed Night Heron enchants birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts alike with its elusive charm and striking appearance most active during the early mornings and late evenings, offering a rare and magical sight for those fortunate enough to catch a glimpse.

- **Wetland Specialists:**

Observe species uniquely adapted to wetland habitats, such as the African Swampphen, Lesser Jacana and the African Marsh Harrier, Gray-headed Gulls and more

- **Waterbird Diversity:**

Witness a spectacular array of waterbirds, including herons, egrets, and kingfishers.

Protecting the Keystone species in the wetland

The Iconic Shoebill



Mabamba remains the most popular birding spot in Uganda famed for the presence of the Endangered Shoebill species in the mud fish-infested swamps of Mabamba Bay. Tourism is critical to conserving the Shoebill species in Uganda, particularly within the Mabamba Wetland. It generates essential revenue through site fees, guided tours, accommodation and services that contribute to conservation efforts.

This income also encourages crucial research on Shoebill population dynamics, breeding patterns, and habitat use, informing effective conservation strategies. Additionally, tourism raises awareness and educates visitors about the Shoebill's unique characteristics and the threats it faces, fostering greater support for conservation initiatives. Moreover, tourism provides local communities with alternative income sources, reducing reliance on activities that harm the Shoebill's habitat.

This economic incentive aligns community interests with conservation goals, creating a positive feedback loop. Formerly, the Shoebill “Buulwe” was considered a threat to fishing activities given its massive appetite for fish and this natural conflict with fishermen was a major driver for a decline in the Shoebill count. However, tourism has driven the establishment of protected areas, facilitated the sensitisation of local communities and promoted sustainable land use practices that safeguard the Shoebill's habitat.

In Mabamba Wetland specifically, Shoebill sightings have attracted birdwatchers and ecotourists, leading to increased interest in the wetland's conservation and attracting several interventions championed by both public and private sector actors. Tourism revenue has also funded community conservation projects and the development of eco-friendly infrastructure, further benefiting the Shoebill and its habitat.

DISCOVER BUSSI ISLAND'S BIRDING TRAILS



Orange Weaver



Grey-headed Gull



Black Kite

- Park Shoebill trail
- Flufftail Trail
- Farm Trail
- Sooty Chat Trail
- Farm Trail

Bussi Island is located within the Mabamba wetland ecosystem which is crucial for local biodiversity and economic stability but also holds global significance as a Ramsar site and an Important Bird Area. Mabamba wetland provides invaluable ecosystem services, including water supply, fishing, carbon storage, and tourism opportunities, contributing to local livelihoods and global climate change mitigation estimated to have a value of over UGX 3 BN and attracting at least 2000 birdwatchers annually.

Therefore, investing in trail guide mapping is an investment in preserving these essential ecosystems and the rich biodiversity they support.

Trail Highlights

Shoebill Sightings:

Encounter the iconic Shoebill, often spotted near the wetlands.

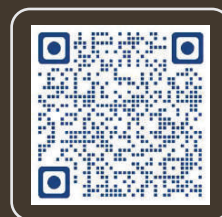
Colorful Turacos:

Marvel at the striking colors of the Great Blue Turaco and Ross's Turaco as they flit through the trees.

Songbird Serenades:

Enjoy the melodic songs of sunbirds, warblers, and flycatchers, filling the air with their harmonious tunes.

Full List Recorded Birds Of Mabamba & Bussi



Birds To Look Out For

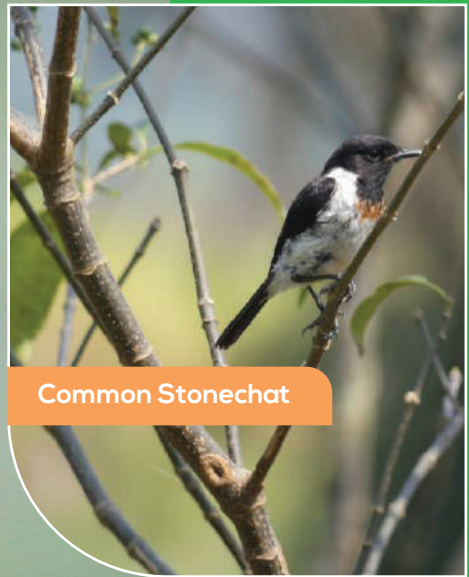


Levaillant's Cuckoo

- Orange Weaver
- Shoebill
- White-faced Scops Owl
- White-spotted Flufftail
- Lesser Jacana
- Scaly Spurfowl
- Levaillant's Cuckoo
- Brown Iliadopsis
- Dwarf Bittern
- Golden-breasted Banting
- Chestnut Wattle-eye
- White-backed Night Heron
- Narina Trogon
- Wayne's Weaver
- Papyrus Gonolek
- African Pygmy Goose



White-faced Whistling Duck



Common Stonechat



Lizard Buzzard

Bussi Island Trails

● Nakiwogo - Bussi Island Boat Drive

10 km boat drive

Travel by boat to Busi Island from Nakiwogo landing site through Waiya Bay of Lake Victoria to Park Shoebill of Busi island. The team took residence at Park Shoebill which would go on to host their stay for the entirety of the trip

● Farm and Woodland trail, Sooty Chat Trail

3.7 km walk

The forest trail leads into a farmland of banana plantations that hosted several bird species. Some of these included the Red-chested Cuckoo, Black-headed Gonolek and Green-backed Camaroptera. The farmland was next to a woodlot that had a variety of birds flying and perching over the area. These included the Sooty Chat, Pygmy Kingfisher, African Fish Eagle, Eurasian Hobby, Palm-nut Vulture, Willow warbler, levaillant's cuckoo, pin tailed Whydahs and White-browed Coucal

● Forest Trail, Fluff-tail Trail

2.8 km walk

This trail is filled with the calls of many bird species that are harder to track compared to the open woodlots. Birds such as the common bulbul, olive bellied sunbird, collared sunbird, purple banded sunbird and camaroptera were seen and some heard. Some rodent species such as the red legged sun squirrel were seen running through the forest.

● Swamp Trail

6 km boat drive

A reception of fishermen welcomed the team to the Mabamba wetland shore which they would go on to explore by canoe boats. Mabamba wetland is Uganda's largest wetland, both an IBA and a Ramsar site. The birding experience was instant with the team spotting a couple of Malachite and Pied kingfishers just at the shore of the wetland. They went on to see the squacco heron, purple heron, African openbill, black crakes (with fighting cat calls), greater swamp warbler, African marsh harrier, swamp hens, blue headed coucal and some gull billed terns. The greatest sight of all was a rare sighting of the hard to spot Shoebill in flight over Mabamba wetland. This Shoebill is one of the rarest sights in the world being listed as Endangered on IUCN's red list. This is due to the fact that several fishermen hunted them and killed them whenever they were found on their fishing grounds believing that they brought bad omen.

The team retreated to Park Shoebill and did some birding within the community before night time. Park shoebill has potential for Night birding with some calls of Nightjars being heard during night time. The red-chested cuckoo (It will rain bird) of course kept the group entertained both day and night.



Spur-winged Goose

Lake Victoria Shoreline Trail – Park Shoebill trail

Highlights:

This trail offers a scenic view of Lake Victoria and is ideal for observing water birds.

Activities:

Bird watching, photography, boat rides.

Other Species:

Long-toed Lapwing, Goliath Heron, Squacco Heron, and Grey-crowned Crane.

● PARK SHEOBILL TRAIL

Habitat: Lake shores, farmland

- Orange Weaver,
- Crowned Hornbill,
- Red-Chested Cuckoo,
- Yellow Wagtail
- Hammerkop



Olive-winged Sunbird

● FLUFFTAIL TRAIL

Habitat: Natural Forest

- Orange Weaver,
- Crowned Hornbill,
- Red-Chested Cuckoo,
- Yellow Wagtail
- Hammerkop

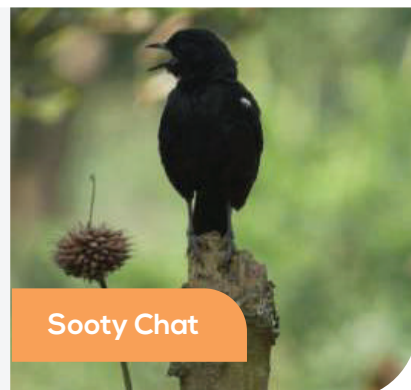


White-spotted Flufftail

● SOOTY CHAT TRAIL

Habitat: Open woodland and farmland

- Sooty Chat,
- Village Weaver,
- Levillant's Cuckoo,
- Black and White Casqued Hornbill



Sooty Chat

What to expect on the trails

Indigenous Trees

The various trees on the island have a wide range of uses including cultural significance, medicinal uses, construction, ecological uses and more

Mammals

Bussi is home to several mammals including Red-tailed Monkeys, Vervet Monkeys, otters, Black and White Colobus Monkeys, Serval Cat

Butterflies

The island is home to a great diversity of insects including several endemic species of butterflies

Excursions

Bussi island

Bussi Island has a lot to offer from Adventure Park at Park Shoebill, to coffee tours, cultural tours on one-day excursions

Mabamba

Visitors can go on day excursions birding in Mabamba

Makanaga

Excursions to Makanaga can be rewarding to see some species especially on floating islands



Otter in Mamba Bay



Vervet Monkey on Bussi Island

PARK SHOEBILL



Location

Park Shoebill is accessible by a 30-minute speed boat ride from the mainland at Nakiwogo bay of Entebbe on the shores of L. Victoria.

✉ bookings@parkshoebill.com
📞 Phone: + 256 773 002 553
📞 Phone: + 256 777 288 204

Park Shoebill Memorable Base Camp



Bandas



Tented Camp



Restaurant

CONSERVATION & COFFEE AT PARK SHOEBILL



Coffee cultivation supports millions of Ugandan families, providing livelihoods and contributing significantly to the national GDP. The country's unique climate and fertile soils create ideal conditions for coffee farming, resulting in beans that are highly prized on the global market.



Coffee is not just a beverage in Uganda; it is an integral part of the country's economy, culture, and history. Uganda is one of Africa's leading coffee producers, known for its highquality Arabica and Robusta beans.



Coffee Tourism Trail on Bussi Island

What to expect



● Coffee Plantation Tours

Park Shoebill offers guided tours of local coffee plantations, where visitors can learn about the coffee-growing process from seed to cup. These tours provide an in-depth look at the cultivation, harvesting, and processing of coffee beans.

● Interactive Experiences:

Visitors can participate in hands-on activities such as picking coffee cherries, roasting beans, and brewing their own coffee. These interactive experiences give tourists a deeper appreciation of the craftsmanship involved in coffee production.



● Cultural Integration:

Cultural Significance:

Coffee tourism at Park Shoebill is often accompanied by storytelling that highlights the cultural significance of coffee in the local community.

Coffee has become an integral part of Ugandan culture, with traditional practices and rituals centered around coffee consumption and production. It is often served during social gatherings and ceremonies, symbolizing hospitality and community.

Coffee Tourism Trail on Bussi Island

● Coffee Processing, Tasting and Education:

Coffee processing:

After touring the plantations, discover the intricate processes involved in turning coffee cherries into the beans we brew. This includes washing, drying, hulling, and roasting.

Coffee Tasting Sessions:

After touring the plantations, visitors can enjoy coffee tasting sessions, where they sample different coffee varieties grown in the region. These sessions are led by experienced baristas who explain the unique flavors and characteristics of Ugandan coffee.

Educational Workshops:

The park offers workshops on the history of coffee in Uganda, the economic significance of the crop, and the role of coffee in local culture. These workshops provide valuable insights into the importance of coffee to the region and its people. Coffee remains Uganda's most valuable agricultural export, accounting for a significant portion of the country's foreign exchange earnings. The coffee industry supports the livelihoods of millions of Ugandans, from farmers to traders and exporters.

Community empowerment through coffee tourism

Our coffee farm is more than just a source of high-quality beans—coffee farming at Park Shoebill is a lifeline for over 20 families on Bussi Island. Every cup of coffee is a story of community empowerment and environmental stewardship.

As you embark on your coffee journey with us, you'll discover how we're transforming this farm into a vibrant hub of opportunity. Each tour you take not only deepens your appreciation for the art of coffee cultivation but also directly supports the hardworking men and women who nurture these beans from seed to cup.

But the impact of your visit goes beyond the farm. Through coffee tourism, you can contribute to empowering local farmers to improve their techniques, join cooperatives, and create artisanal products that showcase the island's unique culture. Guided tours of the coffee farm helps visitors learn about sustainable coffee farming practices, from planting to harvesting. This serves as a model for other local farmers, showing how coffee farming can be a viable and sustainable income source. This initiative has sparked a ripple effect, providing jobs, enhancing skills, and generating income that flows back into the community—supporting education, healthcare, and sustainable development.



Park Shoebill Commitment:



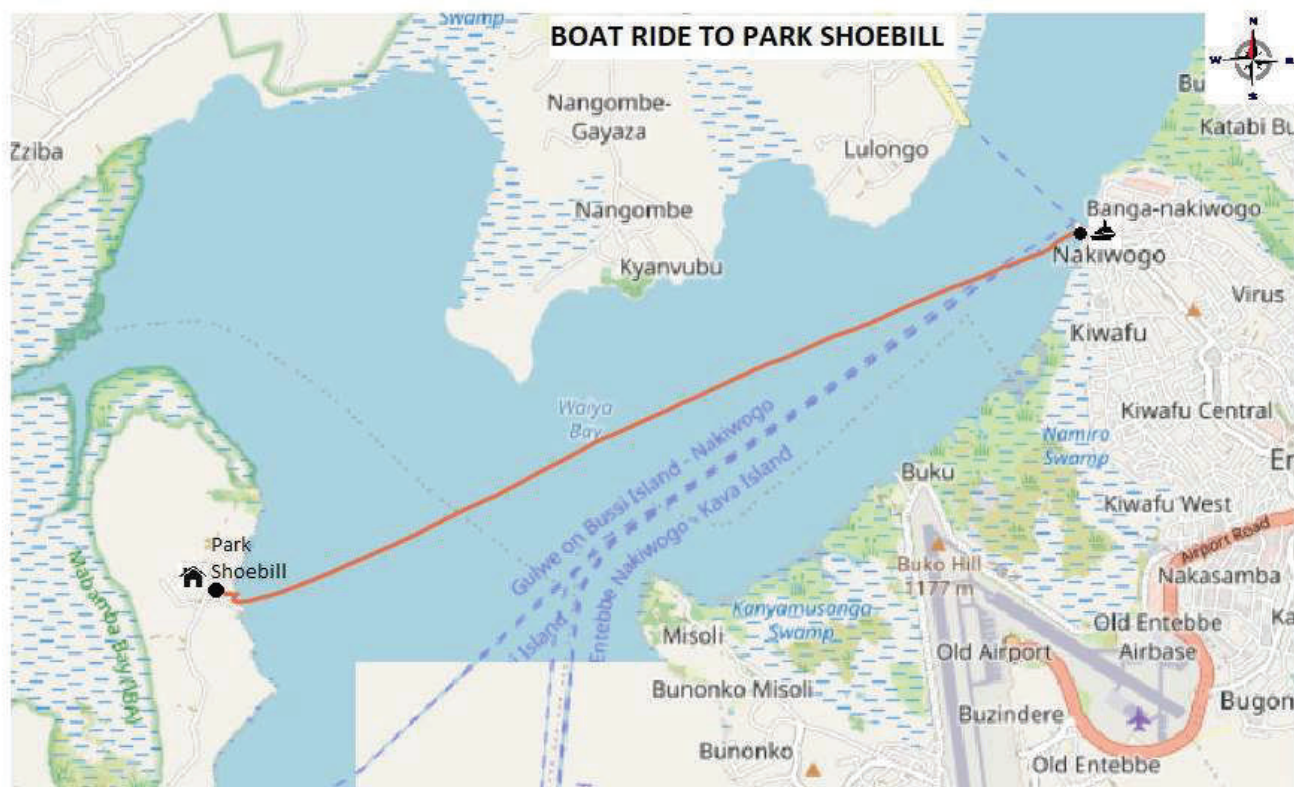
Park Shoebill is deliberate in contributing to conserving Mabamba and Makanaga's rich avian biodiversity. We recognize the importance of preserving critical bird habitats and promoting sustainable tourism practices that benefit both the environment and local communities.

In collaboration with Avian Conservation Uganda Society, Park Shoebill actively supports initiatives to protect endangered species, monitor bird populations, and raise public awareness about the importance of bird conservation. Our trail mapping efforts exemplify this commitment, providing visitors and local communities with an immersive and educational experience while ensuring minimal impact on sensitive ecosystems.

Park Shoebill ensures visitors embarking on an unforgettable birding adventure can also contribute directly to the conservation of Uganda's remarkable birdlife and the cultural, economic, aesthetic and ecological benefits that avian life brings. We invite you to join us in our mission to protect these feathered treasures for generations to come.

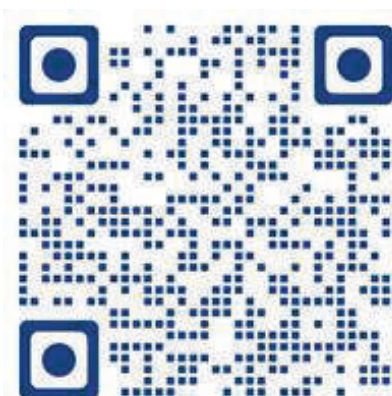


Getting There

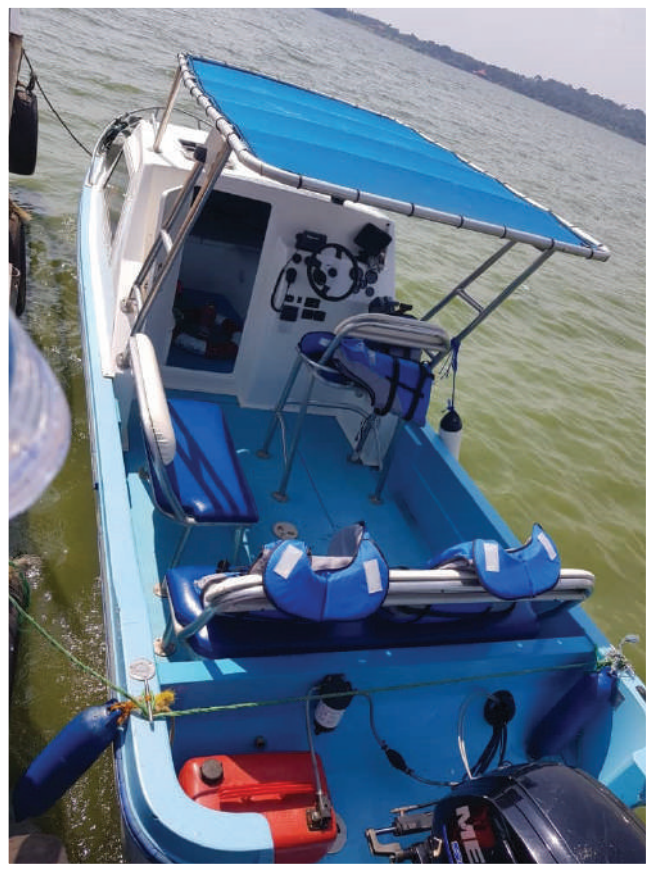


Transport:

Park Shoebill provides boats and safety gear for a 30-minute boat ride to Park Shoebill resort on Bussi Island. Clients may book through email or phone. Website accessible using QR code below



As part of their commitment to responsible tourism, Park Shoebill offers safe transportation across Lake Victoria with their fleet of speed boats. Each boat is operated by well-trained captains who prioritize both passenger safety and environmental preservation. These captains are not only skilled navigators but also stewards of the lake, ensuring that every journey minimizes ecological impact while providing visitors with an unforgettable experience of Uganda's natural beauty.



Other Activities at Park Shoebill

Additional Activities for Tourists and Visitors at Park Shoebill Resort, Bussi Island, and Mabamba

1. High Ropes Course and Zipline:

The High Ropes Course and Zipline offer a thrilling experience high above the ground, where participants navigate a series of challenging obstacles and then soar through the air on a zipline. Participants can expect to test their balance, strength, and courage as they tackle suspended bridges, tightropes, and other aerial challenges. The zipline ride is an adrenaline-pumping finale, offering breathtaking views of the park's landscape from above. The course is strategically set to give participants a bird's-eye view of the surrounding forest, wetlands, and possibly the lake, making the experience both thrilling and visually stunning.



2. Tubing on Lake Victoria

Tubing on Lake Victoria is a water-based adventure where participants ride inflated tubes across the lake's surface, either leisurely or at high speeds, depending on their preference. This activity combines the serenity of floating on the lake with the excitement of being towed behind a speedboat. Whether you're looking for a relaxing drift or a thrilling ride, tubing offers a fun way to enjoy the water. Tubing is a fantastic group activity, where friends and family can compete in races or simply enjoy the splashes and laughter together.



3. Zorb Ball:

The Zorb Ball is a large, transparent inflatable ball in which participants can climb inside and roll down gentle slopes or flat terrain, often bumping and bouncing along the way. Being inside a Zorb Ball is a unique and exhilarating experience, offering a mix of tumbling, spinning, and rolling that's both disorienting and incredibly fun. It's an activity that brings out the laughter and excitement in everyone.

The soft, cushioned interior of the Zorb Ball ensures that participants are safe while enjoying the thrills, making it suitable for all ages.



4. Boat Rowing:

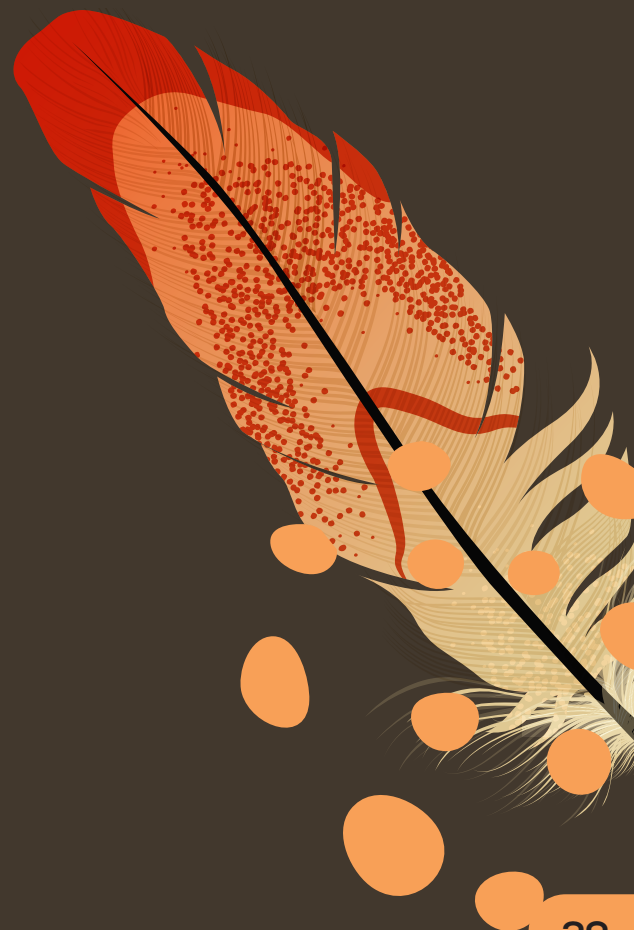
Boat rowing at Park Shoebill allows visitors to navigate the tranquil waters of Lake Victoria at their own pace, enjoying the peaceful environment and the chance to explore the lake's hidden corners. Rowing provides both a physical workout and a meditative experience as you glide through the water, surrounded by the beauty of the lake. It's a great way to connect with nature while engaging in a traditional activity.

5. Guided Nature Walk:

The Guided Nature Walks at Park Shoebill are immersive tours led by knowledgeable guides, taking visitors through diverse ecosystems, including forests, wetlands, and grasslands.

These walks offer an intimate encounter with the park's flora and fauna. Participants learn about the local biodiversity, including bird species, plant life, and possibly encountering smaller mammals and reptiles.

The guides provide fascinating insights into the ecological significance of the area, the species that inhabit it, and ongoing conservation efforts, making the walk both educational and adventurous.



3. Birdwatching and Mammal Tracking Combo Tours

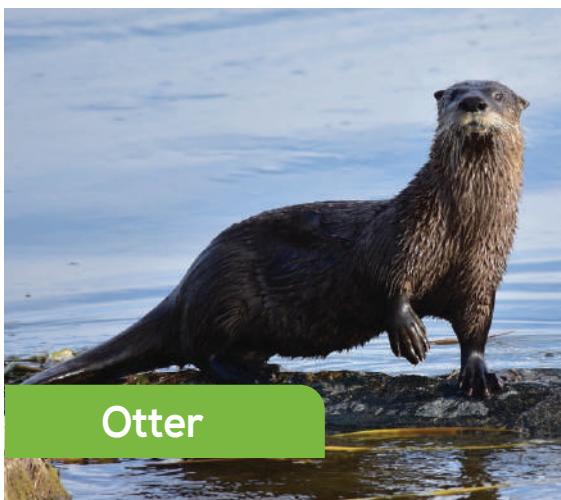
Birding with a Mammal Focus:

Since Bussi Island and Park Shoebill are renowned for birding, combining birdwatching with mammal spotting can provide a comprehensive wildlife experience. Tourists can enjoy the thrill of spotting birds while being on the lookout for the island's mammals including Red-tailed Monkeys, Vervet Monkeys, otters, Black and White Colobus Monkeys, Serval Cat.



Mammal Tracking Expeditions:

Tourists can participate in primate tracking expeditions to follow and observe vervet monkeys, one of the common primates on Bussi Island including Red-tailed Monkeys, Vervet Monkeys, otters, Black and White Colobus Monkeys, Serval Cat. This activity involves learning about their social structures, communication methods, and foraging habits.



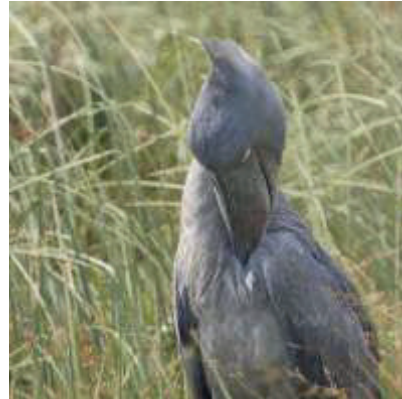
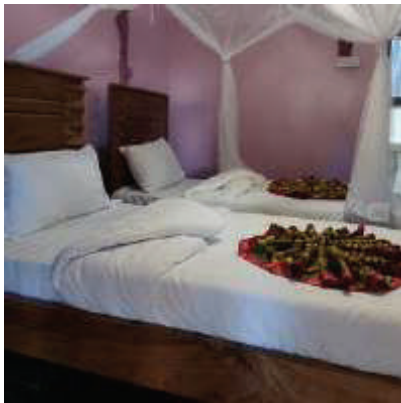
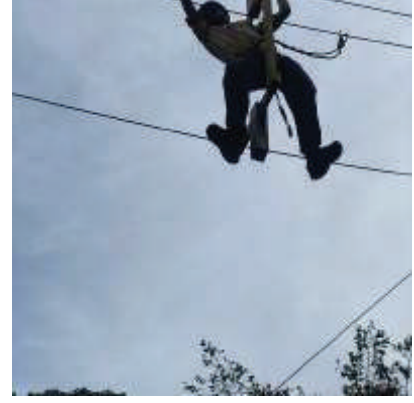
Otter



Black & White Colobus Monkey



Red-tailed Monkey



Photography Tours:

The rich biodiversity offers photographers opportunities to capture both birds and mammals in their natural settings. Special photography tours can be organized to focus on getting the best shots of mammals like bushbucks or vervet monkeys.

4. Eco-tourism, Educational and Conservation Activities

Wildlife Conservation Talks:

Park Shoebill can organize educational sessions that focus on the conservation status of the mammals found on Bussi Island. Topics can include the importance of preserving their habitats, threats they face, and conservation efforts underway.

Eco-friendly Camping:

Tourists can participate in eco-friendly camping activities at Park Shoebill, where they can learn about sustainable practices that help conserve the habitats of local mammals.



Educational Tours:

The park organizes educational tours for school groups and other visitors interested in learning about the wetland ecosystem, conservation efforts, and the importance of preserving this unique environment.

Community Involvement:

The park works closely with local communities, engaging them in conservation activities and promoting sustainable tourism practices. This collaboration helps to ensure that conservation efforts are both effective and inclusive.

5. Boat Excursions and Aquatic Mammal Viewing

Boat Safaris

While primarily focused on aquatic birds, boat safaris around the wetlands may also offer glimpses of semi-aquatic mammals like otters. These excursions provide a peaceful way to explore the waters surrounding Bussi Island and spot wildlife along the shores.

Cultural Interactions:

Tourists can engage with local communities to learn about traditional knowledge related to the mammals on the island, such as folklore, traditional fishing practices, and the role of these mammals in local culture.



Equator Line Experience:

Tourists can embark on a boat trip to the Equator, where they can experience the unique geographical phenomenon of standing on the Equator line. This excursion is often combined with a visit to local communities, offering insights into the way of life in equatorial regions.

Scenic Views:

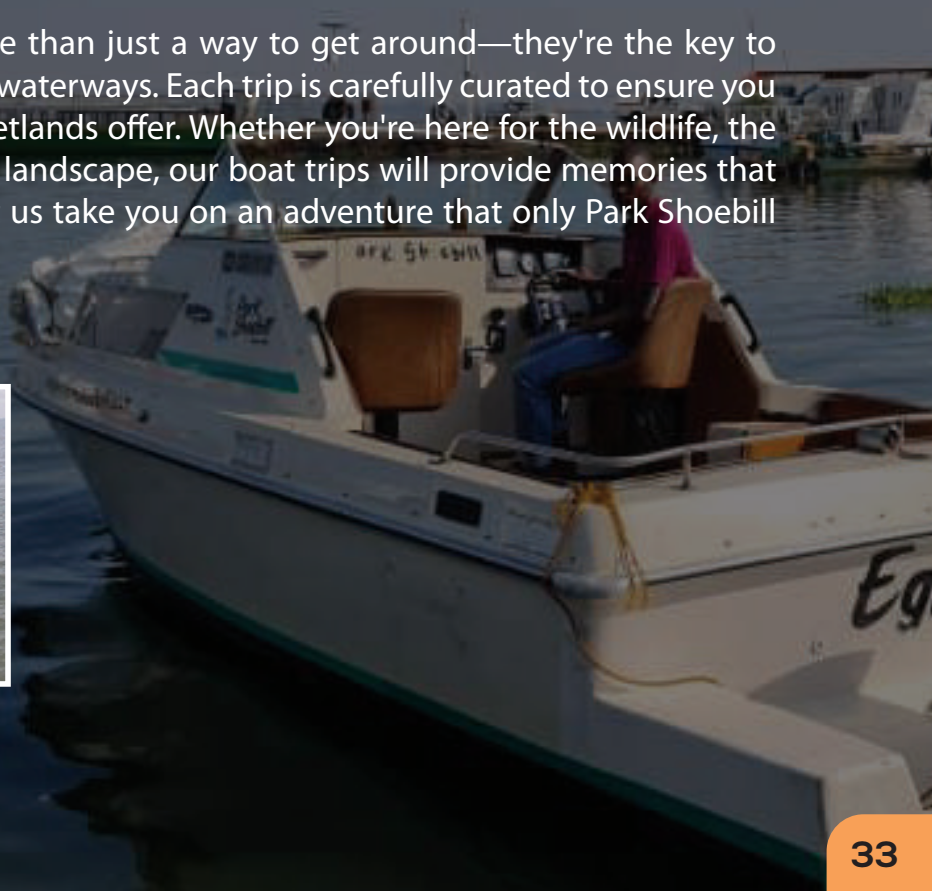
The boat journey provides breathtaking views of the surrounding landscapes, including lush forests, open water, and distant mountain ranges. It is a tranquil and scenic experience that complements the wildlife and cultural experiences offered at Park Shoebill.



Sunset Cruises and Leisure Trips

End your day with a sunset cruise, a leisurely journey where you can unwind with a drink in hand, watching the sun dip below the horizon, painting the sky in hues of orange and pink. It's the perfect way to relax after a day of exploration, offering a serene and romantic setting that's ideal for couples, families, or solo travellers.

At Park Shoebill, our boats are more than just a way to get around—they're the key to unlocking the wonders of Uganda's waterways. Each trip is carefully curated to ensure you experience the best the lake and wetlands offer. Whether you're here for the wildlife, the culture, or simply the beauty of the landscape, our boat trips will provide memories that last a lifetime. Come aboard and let us take you on an adventure that only Park Shoebill can offer.



Appendix

Trees On Bussi Island Trails

PARK SHOEBILL TRAIL

1. *Rauvolfia vomitoria*

(Kawule)- Indian snake root tree

Medicinal uses: Treats diabetes, malaria, high blood pressure and deworming.

2. *Erythrina abyssinica*

(muyirikiti, bwita) - red hot pokertree /lucky bean climber

3. *Croton sylvaticus*

(musogasoga, nwatansale) - forest croton

Uses: Ornamental, windbreaker and firewood

Cultural use: Ladies put its seeds in petroleum jelly to attract men by smearing the oil. It attracts birds, especially Sunbirds.

4. *Ficus nantalensis*

(mutuba, mutoma) - bark cloth tree

Medicinal use: Treat tonsils, amoeba, dysentery, cough, bed wetting, ulcers, and high blood pressure.

Other uses: Timber, drums and motors

Cultural attachments: The bark cloth obtained from the above tree is used in many cultures especially the Baganda during burials, weddings, kings' coronations etc.

5. *Ficus exasperata*

(luwawu, musomoro)- sand pepper tree

Medical uses: Treats wounds, Skin infections, Stomach ache and respiratory diseases.

Other uses: Sand pepper for cleaning utensils. Its leaves and fruits are eaten by primates and bird.

6. *Canarium schweinfurthii*

(muwafu)- African Canarium, incense tree

Medicinal use: Treats high blood pressure, Stress, Miscarriages, Cough

Other uses: Food for primates, birds and man, Timber.

Cultural attachments: Bracken incense is burnt to chase away evil spirits.

Used to light a fire

7. *Balikiaea insignis*

(nkobakoba)

Uses: Cooked seeds are used as food during famine

8. *Amaranthus spinosus* spiny amaranthus

Medicinal use: Treats ulcers, boils, asthma

Uses: Food for birds, mammals, primates and man. Also eaten by Egyptian Goose

9. *Ficus stulmannii* veld fig

Medicinal uses: Treats indigestion, diabetes and heart diseases Other uses: Eaten by birds, animals and man

10. *Canthium vulgare* - canthium

Medicinal uses: treats stomach ache, dementia

Other uses: Windbreaker, food for birds and primates.

11. *Myrianthus holstii*

(mugunga/musinya, muro echuvu, mufe, kiruhura, mwebende) - giant yellow mulberry

Uses: Food for birds and primates



12. Shirakioipsis elliptica Syn. Sapium ellipticum (musasa, mushasha,

musanvuma - jumping seeds

Medicinal use: Cramps, cough, skin diseases. Aphrodisiac

Other uses: Food for birds and animals

13. Albizia grandibracteata

(mulongo , nongo, mushebeye)- large leaved albizia

Medicinal use: Treats asthma, Arthritis, Leprosy, ulcers, and boils Other uses: Nitrogen fixing, soap making (bark of the tree)

14. Ficus ovata Maraca

(Mutoma) - Kook Owe

Medicinal use: Treats wounds

Other uses: Food for birds and primates

15. Pachystela brevipes (nkalate) -

Uses: Timber, Shade, food (fruits) eaten by birds and primates

16. Alchornea cordifolia (oluzibaziba) - parrot tree, Christmas bush

Medicinal uses: Treats malaria, diabetes, Cleaning of women's tubes, High blood pressure

Other uses: Food for animals and birds

17. Margaritaria discoidea

(kamenyambazi, makalamusongate, muremampango)

Uses: Timber (construction), Tool handles

18. Pycnanthus angolensis

(Muno, Mukogota) -Pycnanthus, African Nutmeg, False Nutmeg

Medicinal use: Antidote for poison, leprosy, anemia, infertility, gonorrhea and malaria.

19. Ficus thonningii (Mutana)

- Strangler Fig

Medicinal Use: Treats high blood pressure, tonsils, dysentery, cough. Other uses: Food for primates and birds

20. Maesopsis eminii(musizi) - umbrella tree

Medicinal use: Treats constipation, vomiting

Other uses: Good for timber and windbreaker

21. Trema orientale - charcoal tree

Medicinal use: Treats respiratory diseases, inflammation, cough, sore throats, bronchitis, gonorrhea, yellow fever

Other uses: Firewood and food for primates.

22. Funtumia africana

(nkago, munyumatugu, nyakukago, musanda - bush rubber, false rubber

Medicinal use: Purgative

Other uses: Timber, Shade, Food for animals

23. Aframomum angustifolium

(amatungulu , amatehe) - alligator pepper/wild ginger

Medicinal uses: Treats cough, flu, antidotes for poison, dewormer and antioxidant

Other uses: Food for primates, humans, and acts as food spices

24. Blighia unijugata -triangle top

Uses: Firewood, timber, Food (fruits) for birds and primates.

25. Ficus mucosa

moraceae (mukunyu)- figtree Medicinal uses: Treats syphilis, Wounds, Cough, Food (fruits) for primates, elephants and birds

Other uses: Timber (canoes, firewood)

26. Milicia exelsa

(olwaa, mutuba)

Medicinal uses: Treats stomach ache, Early madness

Other uses: Timber (furniture and construction), Shade

27. Morinda lucida

(mubanjasyai, mulyambwa

Medicinal use: Treats diabetes type one, High blood pressure antioxidants Other uses: Timber, Shade

28. *Artocarpus heterophyllus*

(fene)- jackfruit

Medicinal use: Treats diabetes

Other uses: Food (fruits) for primates and humans

29. *Pseudospondias microcarpa*

(muzira, mungu)- Africa grape tree

Medicinal uses: Treats cough, Stomach ache, Eyes (resia)

Other uses, Beads (seeds)for decoration, food (fruits) for birds and primates,

FARM TRAIL

30. *Psidium guajava*

(mapeera)- guavas

Medicinal use: Treats cough, Flu, allergies and malaria

Other uses: Food (fruits) for bird's primates and human

31. *Polyscias fulva* (setala, murungu)- parasol tree

Medicinal use: Treats ulcers, Stomach ache

Other uses: Musical instruments like drums

32. *Markhamia lutea*

(nsambya, musavu, misola)- markhamia

Medicinal use: Treats eyes, Nose and ears

Other uses: Soil conservation, Timber (tool handles and furniture, flowers good for birds e.g. Sunbird)

33. *Persea americana* - avocado pear

Medicinal use: Treats anemia, Cough, High blood pressure, Increases food appetite

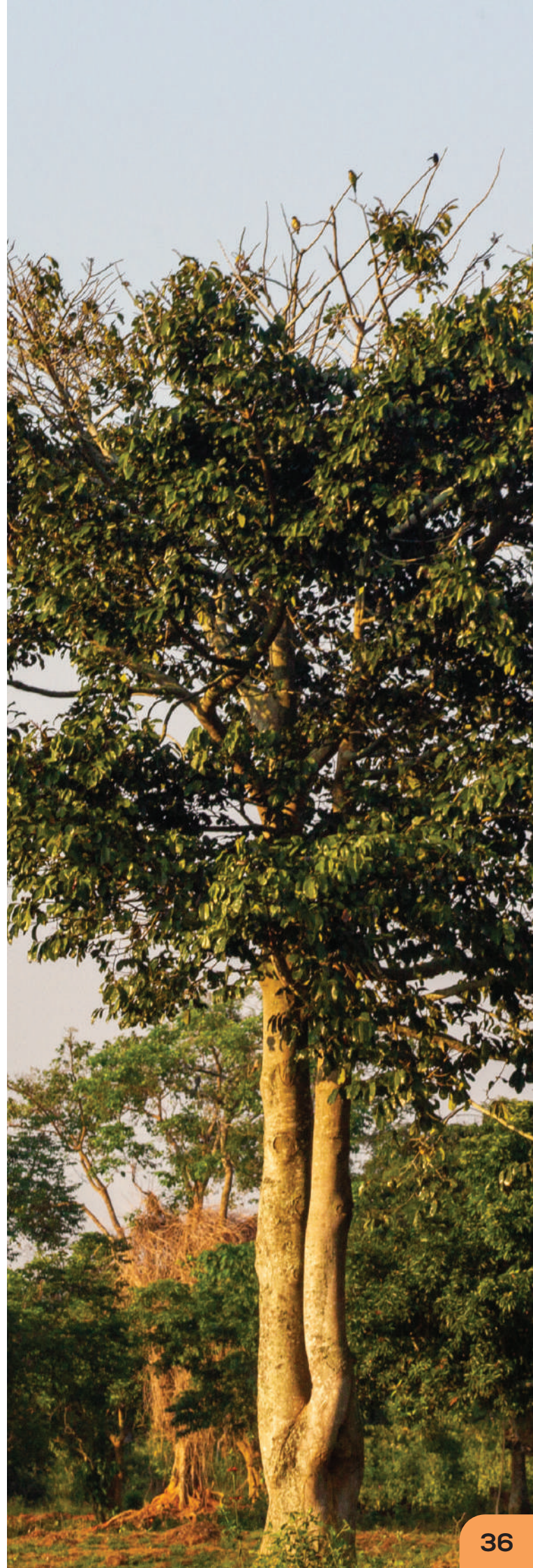
Other uses: Food (fruits) for humans, birds and primates, Firewood

34. *Spathodea campanulata*

(kifabakazi, omunyara)- flame of the forest, nandi, nile flame

Medicinal use: Treats skin diseases, impotence

Other uses: Timber, Ornamental Cultural use: Western Uganda cultures debark and boil to drink to increase female sexual fluids.



Nesting Sites

Bussi island The forests on Bussi Island are characterized by dense vegetation, including a mix of indigenous trees, shrubs, and undergrowth. This dense cover provides ideal nesting and foraging grounds for various bird species. The vegetation structure ranges from tall canopy trees to lower shrubs, creating multiple layers of habitat that support different bird species with varying habitat preferences.

Notable Nesting Trees on Bussi

1. *Sterculia dawei*- Musandasanda
2. *Rauvolfia vomitoria* -
3. *Erythrina abyssinica* - muyirikiti
4. *Antiaris toxicaria*
5. *Croton sylvaticus* - musogasoga
6. *Ficus natalensis* - mutuba
7. *Ficus exasperata* - luwawu
8. *Canarium schweinfurthii* - muwafu
9. *Pycnanthus anyolensis*
10. *Alchornea cordifolia*
11. *Polycias fulva*
12. *Canthium vulgare*
13. *Newtonia buchananii*
14. *Alchornea cordifolia*
15. *Maesopsis eminii*

Wetland Nesting

Several waterbirds nest in the reeds, floating vegetation and the shores of the wetland. It is important to minimise disturbance of nesting sites





Plan Your Visit

Embarking on a birding expedition at Park Shoebill and the surrounding wetlands is more than a trip; it's an adventure into the heart of one of Africa's most vibrant ecosystems. Whether you're capturing the moment through your camera lens or simply soaking in the beauty of the avian world, these trails promise a journey of discovery and wonder.

The Coffee and Chats Trail at Park Shoebill offers visitors a unique opportunity to experience the intersection of coffee cultivation and bird conservation. As you walk along this trail, surrounded by lush vegetation, watch for bird species like the Sooty Chat, Pygmy Kingfisher, and Palm Nut Vulture. The trail likely winds through areas where coffee is grown, providing insights into the cultivation process and the importance of sustainable practices that support bird habitats.

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