After 30 years of crippling civil war, Angola is now at peace and actively encouraging tourism. During our 18 day tour, we expect to visit all the key sites for the numerous Angolan endemics and near-endemics, from the fabled Gabela Forests to the spectacular Tundavala Escarpment, which drops more than 1000m (3,300ft) onto the coastal plains below. Habitats we will cover range from the parched Namib Desert to misty scarp forest and tracts of pristine, broad-leaved Miombo woodland. We expect to find many birds seen by very few ornithologists, explorers or birders, and possibilities still remain for rediscovering several species – or perhaps even finding new species to science! Our itinerary includes sites for the recently rediscovered Swierstra’s Francolin, Braun’s Bushshrike and beautiful White-headed Robin-Chat. Join us for what will be a truly exciting tour of this stunning and little-explored country!
THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

THE ITINERARY

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TOUR ROUTE MAP...
**THE TOUR IN DETAIL...**

**Day 1: Arrival in Lubango and transfer to Tundavala.** After arrival in the peaceful city of Lubango, you will be met at the airport and transferred to the nearby Tundavala Escarpment, just 15km from Lubango, where we will camp for the next three nights. The southern city of Lubango fortuitously escaped the ravages of the civil war and life seems pretty normal here; there is even a traditional artists shop!

**Day 2: Tundavala Escarpment.** This incredible site offers the most dramatic scenery in the country, with huge cliffs dropping over 3,000 feet (1,000m) onto the coastal plain below. Here we will spend our time exploring the extensive grasslands, patches of Afro-montane forest and rugged gorges at an approximate altitude of around 7,000 feet (2,200m).

Tundavala is one of few sites for the little-known and recently rediscovered Swierstra’s Francolin, while other Angolan endemics that occur here are the fabulous Angolan Cave Chat, the uncommon Angolan Slaty Flycatcher and the very localised Ludwig’s (Montane) Double-collared Sunbird. Other birds recorded during our earlier visits include Lanner Falcon, Freckled Nightjar, Bradfield’s and Alpine Swifts, Black-collared Barbet, Greater Striped Swallow, Hartlaub’s Babbler, Striped Pipit, Short-toed Rock Thrush, Bocage’s Akalat, Wailing and Wing-snapping Cisticolas, Green-capped and Salvadori’s Eremomelas, Oustalet’s Sunbird, Jameson’s Firefinch, Angolan Waxbill (a recent split from Yellow-bellied Waxbill), Yellow-crowned Canary and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting.

**Day 3: Day trip to Namibe.** Today we will drive down to the area around the seaside village of Namibe. Our first main birding site will be the absolutely breath-taking Leba Scarp. This area has produced some top class birding during our previous tours; here we recorded Augur Buzzard, Grey Kestrel, Fülleborn’s Longclaw, Rockrunner (Damara Rock-jumper) and the delightful Cinderella Waxbill.

Once we reach the bottom of the escarpment, the scenery will become progressively more arid until we enter the Namib Desert’s gravel plains. We will find a wide range of birds in these varied habitats, including many species previously considered to be Namibian specials. In particular, we will look out for Ludwig’s Bustard, Red-crested Korhaan,
Namaqua Sandgrouse, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Monteiro’s and Damara Red-billed Hornbills, Gray’s, Stark’s, Benguela Long-billed and Sabota Larks (the local form of the last mentioned species is often split as Bradfield’s Lark), Karoo and Tractrac Chats, Mountain Wheatear, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Chat Flycatcher, the cute White-tailed Shrike (very common here), Ashy and Carp’s Tits, Pale-winged and Meves’s Starlings, Dusky Sunbird, Cape Sparrow and Lark-like Bunting. Other species may include Black-chested Snake Eagle, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Purple Roller, Half-collared Kingfisher and Golden-tailed Woodpecker.

Day 4: Tundavala to Benguela camp. Today after an early breakfast we’ll make the drive up to Benguela. En route we’ll keep a look out for raptors including Brown Snake Eagle, the majestic Bateleur and elusive Ayres’s Hawk-Eagle. Along the way, we may also see Great Spotted Cuckoo, bizarre Böhm’s Spinetail, African Grey Hornbill and Southern White-crowned Shrike. We should arrive at our camp by mid-afternoon, thereby allowing us the cooler hours of the late afternoon to enjoy some wonderful dry country birding. We’ll search amongst some impressive Kopjies (rocky hills), dry thickets and huge Baobab trees for a number of species at the northern edge of their range, some of which one would expect to see only in Namibia. Possibilities include Hartlaub’s Spurfowl, Verreaux’s Eagle, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Common Scimitarbill, Acacia Pied Barbet, Brown-backed Honeybird, beautiful Pirit Batis, Swamp Boubou, Brubru, Black-chested Prinia, Barred Wren-Warbler, Red-headed Weaver, stunning Violet-eared Waxbill and White-throated Canary.

Day 5: Benguela camp to Mount Moco. This morning we will make our way north to Mount Moco. This site is now famous since the little known Swierstra’s Francolin was recently re-discovered here after not having been seen for 40 years! During the drive, we will make some comfort stops as well as stopping for any unusual sightings. We should arrive in the late afternoon where we will set up camp for the next three nights.

Days 6 & 7: Mount Moco. We have two full days to enjoy this incredible area. One of our main targets will be the aforementioned, endemic Swierstra’s Francolin; however, please note that this species is particularly shy and we’ll require a great dose of luck and perseverance to see it! The mountain also supports a number of other specialities and...
so there is plenty to look for. We will traverse various habitats including an isolated patch of Afromontane forest, Miombo scrub and associated grasslands in order to have the best chance of seeking out these specials. In addition, we’ll keep a careful look overhead for Fernando Po Swift.

Slowly working the forest patches, we’ll search for the delightful Laura’s Woodland Warbler (rare), which usually alerts one to its presence by its sweet song, smart Bocage’s Akalat that forages in the forest undergrowth, Margaret’s Batis, and the endemic Angolan Slaty Flycatcher. Both Bar-tailed Trogon and Orange Ground Thrush have been recorded; they are however rare and we would count ourselves very fortunate to see them!

Time spent in the Miombo scrub should produce a different set of specials, including Ludwig’s Double-collared, Oustalet’s and Bocage’s Sunbirds, Black-collared Bulbul, African Spotted Creeper and Ancheta’s Barbet. Several seedeaters can be seen in the area including the interesting Angolan Waxbill, while an isolated population of Dusky Twinspot also occurs here. In the grasslands, we may be lucky to find Finsch’s Francolin, African Marsh Harrier, Common and Black-rumped Buttonquails, African Grass Owl, Marsh Tchagra, Fan-tailed Grassbird, Capped Wheatear and Angola Lark. Other notable species occurring in the area include Red-necked Buzzard, Ruwenzori Nightjar, Schalow’s Turaco, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Western Tinkerbird, Black-backed Barbet, Olive Woodpecker, African Golden Oriole, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher, Rufous-bellied and Miombo Tits, Cabanis’s Greenbul, Black-and-rufous Swallow, Striped Pipit, Evergreen Forest Warbler, Rock-loving, Wailing and Lepe Cisticolas, Sooty Chat, Miombo Rock Thrush, Grey Apalis, African Hill Babbler, Bronzy Sunbird, Red-headed Weaver, Fawn-breasted Waxbill, Orange-winged Pytilia, Thick-billed Seedeater, Yellow-crowned and Black-faced Canaries, and Cabanis’s Bunting.

**Day 8: Mount Moco to Kumbira Forest, Gabela.** This morning we will continue north towards Gabela. En route we will make several roadside stops along any productive areas of forest and enjoy a further taste of the exciting Angolan scarp forest birding.
Loud, raucous calls here betray the presence of the exquisitely beautiful Red-crested Turaco, Angola’s most attractive endemic, and we will find this delightful bird rather common in these forests. The impossibly deep hoots emanating from the understory don’t belong to some undiscovered giant owl, but to another giant, the beautiful Gabon Coucal. Bird parties abound and the commonest bird appears to be Falkenstein’s (Yellow-necked) Greenbul, which always seems to pop into view whilst scanning! Other highly sought-after species here include the diminutive Yellow-throated Nicator, Hartert’s Camaroptera (an Angolan endemic sometimes split from Grey-backed Camaroptera), Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher, Carmelite and Ludwig’s Double-collared Sunbird and Red-headed Bluebill.

Other potential species in this forest patch include African Emerald Cuckoo, Blue Malkoha, the bizarre Yellow-billed Barbet, Western Tinkerbird, Black Saw-wing, Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, Fraser’s Rufous and African Thrushes, Buff-throated and Black-throated Apalises, Green Hylia, African Blue Flycatcher, Pink-footed Puffback, Green-headed, Collared, Olive-bellied and Superb Sunbirds, Dark-backed and Black-necked Weavers, Red-headed Malimbe, Grey-headed Nigrita and Black-and-white Mannikin. In the late afternoon, we will drive to a remote site where we will pitch camp at the forest edge for a three-night stay.

Days 9 & 10: Kumbira Forest. From our peaceful campsite, we will set out on foot to explore the surrounding forests and woodlands. During previous tours, we found many of the very special birds of Gabela Forest not too far from our campsite, including Gabela Akalat in good numbers (previously only known from nine specimens!), Pale-olive Greenbul, the little-known Pulitzer’s Longbill, Forest Scrub Robin, Angolan Batis, Monteiro’s and Gabela Bushshrikes and Red-crested Turaco.

Other species seen here include the isolated Angolan forms of Dusky Tit, Brown-chested Alethe, both Hairy-breasted and Naked-faced Barbets (all possibly distinct and localized enough to attain full species status), Palm-nut Vulture, African Harrier-Hawk, Red-necked Buzzard, Long-crested...

**Day 11: Kumbira to Tombingo Forest, N’Dalatando.** After an early breakfast, we will make our way to Tombingo Forest, which lies in the northern scarp forests. An interesting selection of forest birds occur here and we should have the late afternoon and following early morning to search for Red-fronted Parrot, Piping and African Pied Hornbills, Blue Malkoha, Naked-faced Barbet, Green-backed, Brown-eared and Yellow-crested Woodpeckers, Bocage’s Bushshrike, Black-winged Oriole, Honeyguide Greenbul, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, African Shrike-flycatcher, Sooty Flycatcher, Chestnut-winged Starling, Green-throated and Superb Sunbirds, and Red-headed Malimbe, amongst others. At dusk, we’ll keep a look-out for the crepuscular Bat Hawk and African Wood Owl.

**Day 12: Tombingo Forest to Kinjila, Calandula.** After breakfast, we’ll enjoy some early morning birding, before making our way to Kinjila. Leaving the scarp forest behind, we travel through some interesting Miombo woodland before visiting the fabulous Calandula Falls. These are the second most expansive falls in Africa - after Victoria Falls - and well worth a visit! Thereafter we’ll make our way to camp, where we should arrive in the mid-afternoon. Our campsite is conveniently situated right next to the gallery forest where one of the prize targets for the entire tour resides - the highly sought-after and very attractive White-headed Robin-Chat.
This location is where the type specimen of this most stunning and impressive of the robin-chats was collected, and where it was rediscovered after 40 years and found to be fairly common in 2005. Last year we were only the fourth birding tour to ever visit this site and there are probably less than forty birders alive who have seen this very special species! In fact, on our 2012 tour, we not only managed cracking views of the bird but were also very fortunate to find it feeding on the road at a termite emergence! It really is a beautiful species, extremely localised, has an interesting colour combination and unusual behaviour of running along branches, as well as being one of the largest of all robin-chats.

However, it is rather shy and so patience and perseverance are necessary to see it, but with our allotted time here we should manage good views of this Mega in every sense of the word! Yet another highlight of this area is Brazza’s Martin, which we enjoyed stunning views of in 2012.

**Day 13: Kinjila region.** Apart from the robin-chat, there are a number of interesting species that we may see in the gallery forest. These include the cute White-spotted Flufftail, Ross’s Turaco, Broad-billed Roller, Grey-headed and Blue-breasted Kingfishers, stunning Double-toothed Barbet, Black-throated Wattle-eye, Square-tailed Drongo, Yellow-throated Leaflove, White-chinned Prinia, Brown Illadopsis, Grey-winged Robin-Chat, Brown-headed Apalis, Bannerman’s Sunbird and Dark-backed Weaver.

In the climax Miombo woodlands we will search for African Hobby, Meyer’s Parrot, Levallant’s, Black and Thick-billed Cuckoos, African Barred Owlet, Pale-billed Hornbill, the localized Anchieta’s and lovely Black-backed Barbets, White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike, Whistling Cisticola, scarce Miombo Wren-Warbler, Arrow-marked Babbler, Sharptailed Starling, Miombo Scrub Robin and stunning Anchieta’s, Western Violet-backed and Copper Sunbirds. Wetlands nearby may produce African Finfoot, Chirping Cisticola, Marsh Widowbird and Red-headed Quelea. In the evening we will look for African Scops Owl and Pennant-winged Nightjar.

**Day 14: Kinjila to Damengola Forest, Quitexe.** We have the early morning to search for any specials we may not have seen before continuing north. En route we’ll check any bridges for Red-throated Cliff Swallow and stop for any unusual sightings. We should arrive at our camp in the mid-afternoon, thus enabling us sufficient time to
settle in for a three-night stay before enjoying some afternoon birding. Our scenic campsite overlooks a crater lake where we have previously recorded African Finfoot and African Black Duck.

**Day 15: Damengola region.** We have a full day to explore these wonderful northern scarp forests. Our prime target here will, of course, be the lovely endemic Braun’s Bushshrike and we have a good chance of finding this very recently rediscovered species. This is yet another extremely localised endemic that very few birders have seen. Other forest species we may see here include Afep and Western Bronze-naped Pigeons, Great Blue and Guinea Turacos, African Emerald Cuckoo, Dusky and Olive Long-tailed Cuckoos, Speckled Mousebird, Blue-throated Roller, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, the beautiful Black Bee-eater, impressive Black-casqued Hornbill, Speckled and Red-rumped Tinkerbirds, Cassin’s Honeybird, Elliot’s Woodpecker, Many-coloured Bushshrike, Pink-footed Puffback, Velvet-mantled Drongo, Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher, Swamp Palm Bulbul, Green Hylia, Tit-Hylia, Yellow Longbill, Banded Prinia, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Blue-throated Brown and Little Green Sunbirds, Yellow-mantled Weaver, Crested Malimbe, Woodhouse’s Antpecker, and White-breasted and Chestnut-breasted Nigritas.

During our 2011 tour, we also recorded White-collared Oliveback, a new species for the country and a major range extension. This is, in fact, a very under-birded area and hence there may well be more exciting discoveries awaiting us here! In the surrounding scrub and grasslands, we’ll watch for Blue-headed Coucal, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Brown-backed Scrub Robin and Brown Twinspot. Other species that have been rarely recorded in the region include White-crested Tiger Heron, Hartlaub’s Duck, Congo Serpent Eagle, Cassin’s Hawk-Eagle, Red-headed Lovebird, White-bellied and Shining-blue Kingfishers, Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill, Bristle-nosed Barbet, Lyre-tailed Honeyguide, African Piculet, White-throated Greenbul, White-tailed Antthrush, Cassin’s Flycatcher, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, Western Black-headed Batis, Scaly-breasted Illadopsis, Fraser’s Sunbird, Pale-fronted Nigrita and Black-bellied Seedcracker; however, we can count ourselves particularly lucky if we see any of these species!

**Day 16: Damengola to south Kissama National Park.** We will depart early for the long drive back to Luanda. En route, we may stop off at a wetland where we have recorded Squacco Heron, African Openbill, Fulvous Whistling and Knob-billed Ducks, Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush by Clayton Burne

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**Crested Malimbe by Markus Lilje**

**Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush by Clayton Burne**
African Swamphen and Long-toed Lapwing (an isolated population). Thereafter we will make our way to Kissama National Park, which protects 68 miles (110km) of coastline south of Luanda, as well as a variety of great birding habitats that include West Africa’s most southerly mangroves, the vast Cuanza River floodplain that teems with waterbirds, riverine forests and a mix of dry woodland types.

After settling into our camp in the park, we will be ready for the upcoming two full day’s exploration of the reserve. In the late afternoon we should find the lovely White-fronted Wattle-eye, which prefers dense riverine thickets, and flocks of Golden-backed Bishop foraging nearby.

Birding in Kissama produces an eclectic mix of both dry country and forest species, and other notable potential birds Little Sparrowhawk, Grey Kestrel, the near-endemic Rüppell’s Parrot, Black Scimitarbill, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill (the local smaller form is likely to be split as a separate species), Petit’s Cuckoo-shrike, Green and Long-billed Crombets, the near-endemic Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush and Angolan Batis. Over three hundred species have been recorded in the reserve, and we will no doubt be kept very busy during our time here!

**Day 17: Kissama NP (Southern to Northern Section) to Cuanza River.** After a morning’s birding around our camp, we will visit an interesting section of Kissama NP where, previously, we have met with some incredible successes; namely, a remote dry riverbed surrounded by a wonderful riparian forest. This wide riverbed allows easy access for birding the best sections of this forest. On past tours here we scored with not one but two groups of the mythical Gabela (Angola) Helmetshrike! Seen by only a select few birders, this will no doubt be our primary target in this fantastic area. Other great birds recorded here include Red-necked Spurfowl, elusive Grey-striped Francolin, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo (a major southern range extension for this species), Narina Trogon, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Monteiro’s Bushshrike, Forest Scrub Robin, Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye and Swamp (Gabon) Boubou. Thereafter we will make our way to the northern part of the park and, if we have found our targets and time allows, we can visit Musulu Lagoon, which harbours a wonderful selection of gulls, terns and waders. These include Kelp and Grey-headed Gulls, Gull-billed, Caspian and Royal Terns, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Little Stint – and more. From here we will move through to our...
lodge situated on the mighty Cuanza River, where we will overnight. After three weeks of camping it will no doubt be a very welcome relief to check into our comfortable lodge.

Day 18: Cuanza River and departure. This morning we will have an opportunity to bird the area. This stunning mangrove-lined river can be quite productive, and here we will search for Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Angolan Swallow, the near-endemic Bubbling Cisticola, Mangrove (Mouse-brown) Sunbird, only recently discovered along this river and a major southern range extension of this species, and, if we are fortunate, the lovely Orange Weaver.

The Cuanza River mouth provides huge sandbars for roosting terns and waders and we are likely to find Caspian, Royal (a flock of over one thousand in 2011!) and Sandwich Terns, plus a number of waders including Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Grey Plover and White-fronted Plover. Other possible species include Western Osprey, African Fish Eagle and Palm-nut Vulture. Manatees do occur in the river but we’d be exceptionally fortunate to see one!

Thereafter we will freshen up and enjoy breakfast before heading off to Luanda, where the tour will conclude at the international airport with our departing flights back home. (Please note: If your flights are only leaving the following day, we can arrange another night at Cuanza Lodge for you. However, bear in mind that this transfer to the airport will be at your own cost.)

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:
Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES below.

The tour price includes:
- All birding activities from arrival until departure;
- Use of 4x4 vehicles throughout;
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 18;
- Camping equipment;
- Drinking water;
- All park entries and guide fees;
- All guiding services (including local guides and tour leaders); and
- Tips for local guides and services.

The tour price excludes:
- ANY flights;
• Passport and visa fees;
• Any drinks besides water;
• Special gratuities; and
• Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement:
The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

IMPORTANT NOTES:
a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.
b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient a small party supplement will have to be charged.
c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to major foreign exchange fluctuations and unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and/or designated Rockjumper leader at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

Tipping:
As noted above, gratuities (drivers, camp staff etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does not include your Rockjumper leader/s. If, therefore, you feel that he/they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them.

Special Notes:
• What with the markedly improved road network throughout the country, this is no longer a strenuous trip, with the long drives now on good tar roads. (About 90% of the trip is on such roads). All nights will be spent camping in often remote areas. However, the tents are spacious and every possible necessity is brought along with us to make this as comfortable as possible. This includes a portable shower (with hot water!) and even a portable toilet. Finally, this tour is conducted at a fairly quick pace in order to track down as many Angolan endemics and specialities as possible within our allotted time span. Nonetheless, the rewards of exploring and birding Angola are truly tremendous for those with a sense of adventure who are prepared to rough it for a few weeks in one of the least birded countries in the world!
• A fair amount of our time is spent in vehicles as we do have to cover long distances in order to get to the best birding areas. The more luggage you pack the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for your comfort and your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20 kg (44 lb) for check in luggage and 8 kg (+18 lb) for hand luggage.
ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:
This tour does not include ANY airfares. The tour will depart from Lubango Mukanka Airport (IATA: SDD) on day 1, which has been set aside as an arrival day. It is only a short transfer from Lubango to our campsite for the first night of the tour. (Please note: The internal flights in Angola can be unreliable and flights to Lubango generally originate from Luanda. Our office will have the latest information on potential flights that can be booked to tie in with the start and end dates of the tour. Please note that you will need to check-in at the domestic terminal at least 2 hours before departure. The tour will conclude at Luanda International Airport on the afternoon of day 18.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:
Quatro de Fevereiro International Airport, Luanda (IATA: LAD) is the main port of entry for international flights in Angola and is serviced by some major airlines. Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.

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