



## THE MANY MARVELLOUS MANGROVE BIRDS OF INHAMBANE

### IMPROVE YOUR BIRDWATCHING

#### KEY BIRDWATCHING TIPS:

- 1. Choose a Professional Field Guide** who is familiar with the local area and local species. Mobile Apps aren't the real thing, though they can provide good information at times.
- 2. Gear Up with binoculars**, protective clothing, water, and a camera.
- 3. Practice Identification** by observing, listening and noticing.
- 4.** It is easier to find birds in the early mornings and natural spaces. **Patience is a virtue** for birdwatching!
- 5.** Blend In using **inconspicuous colours**, earth-toned clothing and quiet movements.
- 6. Be Respectful** to avoid disturbing nests and always follow the law and local regulation.
- 7. Join a club** if you are wanting to further your birdwatching skills, to learn from experts, gain knowledge and swap information.
- 8. Keep Records** such as a Life List and Logbook to track the birds you've seen and to record observations and locations for future reference.

**BOOK NOW:**

[www.seeactivitycentermoz.com](http://www.seeactivitycentermoz.com)



**Bitonga Name: Ngororo**

**Latin Name: Anhinga rufa**

## AFRICAN DARTER

It feeds on fish, which it catches by diving. Unlike other waterbirds, the feathers of the African Darter do not contain any oil and are therefore not waterproof., which means the bird is less positively buoyant therefore its diving capabilities are enhanced. After diving for fish, the feathers can become waterlogged. In order to be able to fly and maintain heat insulation, it needs to dry its feathers. They can weigh between 1 – 1.8 kg and reach a length of 81 – 97 cm, with a wing span: 115 – 128 cm.

Community efforts, like keeping mangroves untouched, help to protect the Baya Weavers. They are referred in Indian drawings + literature often, due to their capacity to build such beautifully complex nests of grass, twigs and branches.

The African Darter is often seen sitting along the waterside spreading its wings and drying its feathers in the wind and the sun. African Darters use their flexible necks for more than just hunting; they will twist and turn them in various ways for bonding displays with their mate.

## GREY HERON

The long bill is orange during the breeding season and yellow at other times. Grey herons usually live only five years.

Male grey herons are picky about their mates. They'll reject a female that they don't fancy. Fishermen used to believe that the heron's legs produced magical substances that attracted fish.

They use the same nest season after season, often building a new one on top of the old. Male herons aren't above stealing roomier nests. Their eggs are a lovely shade of blue-green. They fly with their necks drawn in.



**Bitonga Name: Ngororo**

**Latin Name: Ardea cinerea**



**Bitonga Name:** Lishoa

**Latin Name:** *Ploceus philippinus*

## BAYA WEAVER

Baya Weaver birds are medium-sized- between 15-17 cm long. Its migration is food-driven. Its eating habits change with the seasons which helps it survive in different places. The bird is known for its nest building skills, it makes a long hanging nest with a bulbous chamber and a narrow tubular entrance.

This species builds a stick nest in a tree and lays 3-6 eggs. It often nests with herons and egrets.

The male baya weaver bird is known for its impressive courtship display. It builds an elaborate nest and sings a unique song to attract a mate, that sounds like a continuous 'chit-chit-...' sometimes ending in a wheezy 'cheee-eee-ee' that is produced by males in a chorus. A lower-intensity call is produced in the non-breeding season. They engage in complex social interactions.

## MARICO SUNBIRD

Fully grown, Marico Sunbirds weigh around 11g and measure approximately 13cm in length.

Landscapes carve a natural flight path for foraging opportunities!

The female is the sole incubator of the clutch, with 1-3 eggs laid and hatched about 2 weeks later.

Marico Sunbirds form monogamous pairs and breed from mid-winter through to late summer. It takes the female about a fortnight to build the pear-shaped nest using spider webs and plant material and then camouflaging it using anything from bark to droppings.



**Bitonga Name:** Unkown

**Latin Name:**  
*Cinnyris mariquensis*



**Bitonga Name:**

**Himantopus  
himantopus**

**Latin Name:**

**Nhamundro Nguan**

## BLACK-WINGED STILT

Black-winged stilts are serially monogamous; they form pairs and maintain their bonds only during one breeding season. These birds may nest singly or in loose colonies and each pair defends vigorously their nest site and territory around it. The black-winged stilt is a wading bird which is aided by their legs, the longest relative to body size of any bird. These allow them to remain above the water level while foraging.

Their legs are 60% of their height!

Black-winged stilts are carnivores., with their diet depending on the season. It includes a range of aquatic insects, molluscs, crustaceans, worms, tadpoles, small fish and their eggs.

The female lays up to 4 eggs which are then incubated for about 3-4 weeks by both parents. destruction to habitat is the biggest threat facing this bird species. They are can be found on every continent, and their vocalization is a loud yapping repeated over and over.

## FLAMINGO

Flamingos really are what they eat. Carotenoids found in the microscopic algae that brine shrimp eat, metabolizes the pigments – turning its feathers pink. When it's time to eat, a flamingo will place its head upside down in the water, then sweep its head side-to-side, using its tongue to pump water in and out of its bill. Comb-like plates along the edge of the bill create a filter for water to rush out, while trapping food inside.

A group of Flamingos can be called a flamboyance, colony, stand or pat.

A flamingo's nest looks like a mini mud volcano, with room for one large egg.



**Bitonga Name:**

**Phoenicopteridae**

**Latin Name: Kalahoni**





**Bitonga Name:**

**Unknown**

**Latin Name:**

***Tringa stagnatilis***

## MARSH SANDPIPER

The Marsh Sandpiper is known for its solitary nature or tendency to gather in small flocks.

They breed in Eastern Europe and Eastern Siberia, and migrate to winter in Africa and Asia (and sometimes Australia).

Some sandpipers can migrate more than 8,000 miles without stopping! They usually nest on the ground, and sometimes in trees depending on the species. Sandpipers are considered a traditional food for some Indigenous people of North America. Some sandpipers leave the incubation and raising of chicks to the fathers. Sandpipers may have multiple clutches each year. The number of eggs per clutch varies, but generally, it is around three or four.

Their calls are repetitive and mellow, similar to that of Greenshanks!

## CHESTNUT TEAL

The chestnut teal prefers coastal estuaries and wetlands, and is indifferent to salinity. This bird is an omnivore.

They breed in Eastern Europe and Eastern Siberia, and migrate to winter in Africa and Asia (and sometimes Australia).

Chestnut teals form monogamous pairs that stay together outside the breeding season, defend the nest site and look after the young when hatched. Nests are usually located over water, in a down-lined tree hollow.

Sometimes nests are placed on the ground, among clumps of grass near water. The young hatch and are ready to swim and walk within a day.



**Bitonga Name: Lipado**

**Latin Name: *Anas castanea***



**Bitonga Name:**

**Ardea alba**

**Latin Name:**

**Po Po**

## GREAT EGRET

During breeding season, they develop a bright green patch on their faces between their eyes and their bills.

Egret nestlings have to compete with each other for food, and these competitions can be violent and deadly. In many cases, the stronger chicks will stab their younger and weaker siblings to death. Egret chicks will also attack nest intruders. Great egrets are mostly solitary birds, but during breeding season they often congregate in large groups called colonies or rookeries.

They also grow those long, lacy feathers that were so sought after it almost led to their extinction. They use those delicate feathers, called aigrettes, as part of their mating display. These aigrettes are also what the birds are named after. The word aigrette is French for “silver heron,” and the English term egret was derived from this French word.

## MALACHITE KINGFISHER

Although male and female kingfishers only grow around 13 cm in length, they are still fiercely territorial. These solitary birds usually live alone – except during the breeding season.

There is a special kingfisher adaptation that these birds use to catch their prey – they can adjust for light refraction. Allowing them to tell exactly how deep a fish is before even starting to fly.

Female malachites lay between 3-6 eggs. Both the male and female birds incubate the eggs. Once hatched, the parents spend most of their time bringing back tilapia for the babies to eat. Within just a few weeks, the babies actually weigh more than them.



**Bitonga Name:**

**Corythornis cristatus**

**Latin Name: Unknown**



**Bitonga Name:**  
**Guipomba Verde**

**Latin Name:**  
**Treron calvus**

## AFRICAN GREEN PIGEON

Nesting may take place in any month of the year, though mostly in the summer. The female builds the nest using material gathered by the male, consisting of a flat platform of twigs and leaves, typically placed in the fork of a tree. The female lays one to two eggs that hatch in about 13-14 days and then about 12 days after hatching, the chicks leave the nest. Their green plumage is great camouflage. They are fast fliers. African Green Pigeons reach a length of 22-28 cm. The maroon wing patches in adults are a key feature, along with their yellow thighs. Juveniles may be recognized by their more olive-toned feathers.

They reach a length of around 25-28 cm!

This bird is a vibrant species native to Sub-Saharan Africa.

The African green pigeon is known for its parrot-like climbing abilities, fondness for figs, and a call that sounds like a series of flowing whistles, rendered as 'thweeelo, thweeeo'.

## COMMON REDSHANK

They are also known for their nervous behavior, frequently bobbing their heads and bodies. They are a migratory species, wintering on coasts around the Mediterranean, on the Atlantic coast of Europe from Ireland and Great Britain southwards, and in South Asia.

Redshanks are waders that feed on small invertebrates by pecking or probing mudflats or upper tidal zones. On inland wetlands, their diet consists of fly larvae and earthworms.

They are known for their loud, piping calls, which serve as an alarm to other creatures in the vicinity.



**Bitonga Name:**  
**Tringa totanus**  
**Latin Name: Unknown**



**Bitonga Name:**  
**Nhamapecuane**

**Latin Name:**  
**Coracias caudatus**

## LILAC-BREASTED ROLLER

Like other rollers, they have syndactyl feet, where the second and third toes are fused together. This species is a dimorphic species, it is hard to tell the difference between the 2 sexes.

In some African cultures, the lilac-breasted roller is considered a symbol of peace and reconciliation. The Lilac-Breasted Roller is Kenya's national bird because of the wide array of colours on its feather coat. In total, it has around 8 colours: green, white, black, yellow, turquoise, dark blue, reddish-brown, and lilac. The colours are supposed to represent the many different tribes that make up Kenya's rich diversity.

The male Lilac-Breasted Roller performs a dramatic courtship flight, diving from great heights while rocking and rolling, and making loud calls. They are believed to be monogamous, meaning they mate for life. They are also known as the "fork-tailed roller", "lilac-throated roller", and "Mosilikatze's roller".

## MANGROVE WHISTLER

They are primarily found in mangrove forests, but also in other well-vegetated areas. They are insectivores, feeding on insects and other small invertebrates found in the mangroves.

Overall lack of prominent markings distinguishes it from other mangrove species within its range, with its drab brownish-gray upperparts and white underparts.

Song varies; Indian birds give songs containing long ringing whistles, while Southeast Asian birds give somewhat more complex whistled phrases.



**Bitonga Name:**  
**Tsuelane**

**Latin Name:**  
**Pachycephala cinerea**





**Bitonga Name:**

**Guipanganana**

**Latin Name:**

**Xenus cinereus**

## TEREK SANDPIPER

The Terek Sandpiper, a wader with a long, upturned bill and short legs, is a migratory bird that breeds in Eurasia and winters on coasts across Africa, Arabia, India, Southeast Asia, and Australia, often foraging for crabs and other small prey.

The Terek Sandpiper is named after the Terek River, where it was first observed, in the Northern Caucasus, between Georgia and Russia.

The Terek Sandpiper has a distinctive flight, skimming low over the water with "flicking" downbeats of its wings. They nest on the ground in short vegetation, creating a scrape lined with plant material and debris. During the non-breeding season, Terek Sandpipers primarily feed on crabs, but also consume amphipods, insects, and flies. They forage by pecking at the surface, jabbing, and probing.

They often run with their prey before swallowing it!

## MANGROVE PITTA

Its call is a throaty, fluid two-part "wheew-wheew" whistle, often heard from a high perch in a mangrove tree.

The Mangrove Pitta is an important bio-indicator of the health of mangrove forests. They are listed as "Near Threatened" by the IUCN, due to habitat loss and degradation.

They primarily feed on crustaceans, mollusks, and insects, foraging on mud around mangrove roots and in adjacent drier areas. Its large, heavy bill is adapted for cracking open hard-shelled prey.



**Bitonga Name:**

**Pitta megarhyncha**

**Latin Name:**

**Unknown**





**Bitonga Name:**  
**Pitta angolensis**

**Latin Name:**  
**Unknown**

## AFRICAN PITTA

The African pitta is a rare, elusive, and beautiful bird, known for its bright plumage, shy behavior, and explosive calls, making it a sought-after sighting for birdwatchers.

They are extremely shy and often remain motionless for long periods, making them difficult to spot. They are found on the floor of forests and dense thickets, often along rivers and streams. At least some populations are migratory within Africa, breeding in southern and south-central Africa and then moving to equatorial Africa.

During the breeding season, they build dome-shaped nests high up in thorny trees, with a side entrance and sometimes a landing platform. On average, three eggs are laid between November and January. Chicks do not call for food but wait quietly and patiently.

## BLACK-HEADED HERON

They stalk their prey slowly and deliberately, using a neck sway to encourage prey to move, then strike with a quick thrust of their bill. Their diet includes a variety of insects, small mammals, reptiles, birds, and fish. They nest colonially, in trees, and reedbeds, and build large stick nests.

They stand about 90cm tall with a wingspan of 1.5 meters, and weigh around 1.5 kilograms.

Their flight is slow, with the neck retracted, a characteristic shared by other herons and bitterns. They are also known as Isikhwalimanzi in Xhosa and the uNokilonki in Zulu.



**Bitonga Name:**  
**Ardea melanocephala**

**Latin Name:**  
**Ngororo**



**Bitonga Name:**

**Unknown**

**Latin Name:**

***Peneothello pulverulenta***

## MANGROVE ROBIN

The Mangrove Robin has a distinctive voice, characterized by a plaintive, slow, whistled note that is often repeated. They primarily feed on insects and small crustaceans found on the ground and among mangrove roots.

They often maintain permanent territories, either as pairs or family groups, and spend most of their time on or near the ground. In order to facilitate their navigation through thick mangrove forests, mangrove robins have developed wings and tails that are rounded.

The female builds a compact cup nest of bark and dry vegetation, bound with spider web, decorated externally with vertically hanging bark strips, lined with rootlets, grass and other fine vegetation.

## RED-CAPPED LARK

Red-capped larks are known to mimic the calls of other bird species. They are gregarious birds, often forming large flocks, especially outside the breeding season.

They breed year-round, with breeding activity peaking from September to December. The female constructs a ground-level, open-cup nest, and the male helps provision the female during incubation.

Their song, given in an extended undulating pipit-like display flight, consists of semi-musical chirping notes, often in series.



**Bitonga Name:**

***Calandrella cinerea***

**Latin Name:**

**Unknown**



## MANGROVE HUMMINGBIRD

They measure at around 9.5 to 11 cm in length and weigh about 4.5 grams.

Hummingbirds have a large hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for memory, which allows them to remember the location of food sources. Hummingbirds have tetrachromatic vision, meaning they can see ultraviolet light, which helps them to find flowers that are invisible to humans. Hummingbird tongues are shaped like the letter "W" with tiny hairs at the tip, which allows them to trap nectar and insects.

Like other hummingbirds, the Mangrove Hummingbird primarily feeds on nectar, using its long, thin beak and unique tongue to extract it from flowers. Hummingbirds have very small feet that are not meant for walking, instead they are adapted for perching and clinging to branches.

**Bitonga Name:**  
**Ndrewleu**

**Latin Name:**  
***Chrysuronia boucardi***

## WESTERN REEF HERON

During the breeding season the legs and facial skin are reddish. Breeding birds have two long feathers on the sides of the nape. These birds are also dimorphic.

It occurs mainly on the coasts in tropical west Africa, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf (Iran) extending east to India and Sri Lanka.

These birds stalk their prey in shallow water, running or stirring the water with their feet or flicking their wings to disturb prey; they may also stand still and wait to ambush prey. They eat fish, crustaceans, and molluscs.



**Bitonga Name:**  
**Ngororo**

**Latin Name:**  
***Egretta gularis***



**Bitonga Name:**  
**Guipanganana**

**Latin Name:**  
***Onychoprion fuscatus***

## SOOTY TERN

Sooty terns, also known as "wideawake" terns, are remarkable seabirds that spend much of their lives at sea, rarely landing except to breed, and are known for their loud, distinctive calls and large breeding colonies.

They are highly pelagic seabirds, meaning they spend the vast majority of their lives at sea, often flying for years at a time, returning to land only to breed. They can sleep while flying, using a technique called unihemispheric sleep, where one half of their brain is active while the other half rests. Sooty tern colonies can be extremely noisy, with the calls of the birds being so loud that it is against OSHA standards for workers to be exposed to the noise for longer than half an hour.

Their feathers are not waterproof, so they spend a lot of time flying to avoid becoming waterlogged. They feed by skimming the surface of the ocean for small fish and squid, often in association with other predators like tuna and dolphins.

## MANGROVE KINGFISHER

They are known for their loud, raucous calls, described as a series of "tchi" notes. During breeding season, they spread their wings as part of their courtship display.

Mangrove kingfishers are strictly monogamous and divide parental duties equally, alternating feeding their hatchlings. They eat fish, crabs, prawns, lizards, and insects.

They are considered partial migrants, meaning they move seasonally, often found in mangroves and coastal areas during the winter. They nest in tree holes and termite nests.



**Bitonga Name:**  
**Unknown**

**Latin Name:**  
***Halcyon Senegaloides***



# ALL ABOUT MANGROVES

Bitonga Name: Matsongo | Latin Name: Rhizophoraceae



A mangrove is a shrub or tree that grows mainly in coastal saline or brackish water. Mangroves grow in an equatorial climate, typically along coastlines and tidal rivers. They have particular adaptations to take in extra oxygen and remove salt, allowing them to tolerate conditions that kill most plants.

Many species of mangrove survive by filtering up to 90% of the salt out of seawater as it enters their roots. As mentioned, most trees can't live in saltwater, but mangroves have adapted to live in high-salinity environments along coasts around the world. Their unique root systems help them stay upright in soft, waterlogged soils and give them access to oxygen and nutrients.



Mangrove forests shelter an estimated 1,500 species, of which 15% of those species are threatened with extinction. Thanks to their intricate root systems, they provide nesting, nursery and feeding grounds for many aquatic organisms, including juvenile fish of thousands of species, oysters and mussels, lemon sharks, and more. Above the ocean surface, mangroves also provide critical habitat for many bird species and monkeys.



We have 5 dominant species of Mangroves found in Inhambane, which are: Avicennia Marina, Bruguiera Gymnorrhiza, Ceriops Tagal, Rhizophora Mucronata, and Sonneratia. About 50% of mangrove-associated mammals, 22% of fish, 16% of plants, 13% of amphibians, and 8% of bird and reptile species are threatened with extinction.







Mangrove trees store carbon in their leaves, and when those leaves fall off and sink into the mud and silt, they become what is known as BLUE CARBON (carbon that is stored underwater). Mangrove forests cover just 0.1% of the planet's surface but store up to 10x more carbon per hectare than terrestrial forests. Mangrove species store salt in older leaves or bark. When the leaves drop and the bark sheds, the stored salt is shedded with them.

Two undeniable symptoms of climate change are rising sea levels and increasingly extreme storm surges – and mangroves are a natural solution to protect against the devastation caused by both. A wave passing within 100 meters of a mangrove forest can lose around 2/3 of its energy. Experts estimate that mangrove ecosystems prevent more than \$65 billion in property damages, and reduce flood risks for around 15 million people every year.



Global mangrove maps released by the Global Mangrove Watch in 2020 showed approximately 147,539 km<sup>2</sup> of mangrove forest in the world – with 51% in the Asia Pacific, 29% in the Americas, and 20% in Africa. Daily, mangroves are threatened by persistent degradation, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Though the loss of mangrove forests has stabilized, they still face persistent threats.

If you like fish on your dinner plate then you can probably thank the mangroves. Whether they are spawning grounds for ocean bound fish, habitat for shrimp, or even an important source of algae, fruit, and salt, mangroves are a vital part of the global food supply.

**To help protect mangroves, you can do the following: 1. Understand the importance of mangroves, 2. Understand what is driving their loss, 3. Make sustainable choices, 4. Learn how restoration works, 5. Be an advocate and an activist, 6. SPREAD THE WORD and make some noise because MANGROVES ARE WORTH PROTECTING!**

[www.seeactivitycentermoz.com](http://www.seeactivitycentermoz.com)