

REPORT ON THE PARK SHOEBILL EXCURSION – BUSSI ISLANDS, LAKE VICTORIA

Date: Wednesday 25th March 2026

Prepared by Blessed Isaac Olupot, Excursion Leader

Destination: Park Shoebill

Participants: 21

Host Guide: Mushaija Jackson, Park Shoebill

Total Species Recorded: Approximately 90

Total Distance Covered: Approximately 5km

The Park Shoebill Excursion to the Bussi Islands on Lake Victoria was successfully organized by the Entebbe Birding Club, bringing together 21 participants for a day filled with birding, learning, and networking.

The team assembled at Nakiwogo landing site, where members shared photo moments before departure. The excursion officially began with an introduction session, during which Blessed Isaac Olupot was appointed Excursion Leader of the Day. A light introductory game led by Ochen Allan helped participants learn and remember each other's names.

Following introductions, the Excursion Leader led a discussion about Lake Victoria, focusing on its geographical significance and the countries it is shared by. Upon arrival at Park Shoebill, the team was welcomed by the staff and the Host Guide, Mushaija Jackson, who provided a briefing before the start of activities.

First Session: Birding and Learning Experience

The first sighting of the day was the Western Yellow Wagtail, sparking discussion about migratory (Palearctic) birds.

A discussion on millipedes led by Yampa Abraham covered differences with centipedes and identification features, noting that females are larger while males have gonopods used in reproduction.

The group also explored the African snake root plant, discussing its poisonous nature and how some birds consume it in moderation.

A major highlight was the Golden Bunting. After initial doubt, David Miir

confirmed the sighting with photographic evidence, marking a lifer for both the host guide, the excursion leader and some other participants.

Further discussions covered bird nest types including platform, cup, cavity, burrow, pendant, mound, and scrape nests.

At the cattle demonstration farm, participants discussed the African flame tree, its cultural significance, and uses such as boundary marking and crafting tools like the motor and pestle.

Observation of cattle egrets among livestock led to discussions on mutualism, as well as other ecological relationships like commensalism and parasitism.

It was also discussed that birds generally do not sleep in nests unless incubating eggs or caring for young.

Other sightings included African Green Pigeon, Variable Sunbird, Klaas's Cuckoo, Booted Eagle in flight, and Lesser Striped Swallow.

By the end of the first session, approximately 80 species were recorded over 1.42 miles in about 4 hours.

Second Session: Reflection and Continued Birding

After lunch, leadership from the Entebbe Birding Club encouraged participants, emphasizing learning, networking, and conservation. It was humorously noted that such excursions can also build personal connections.

Access to the shoreline was restricted, limiting movement, but participants continued with relaxed birding.

A highlight was sighting two Black-and-white-casqued Hornbills. The second session recorded 13 additional species.

In conclusion, the excursion concluded with closing remarks and a group photo. Despite minor challenges, the event was successful in promoting birding, learning, and community engagement.

Note the photos of our moments will be shared by David Miir