

Birders Lens Joins Conservation Community in Celebrating Global Big Birding Day and World Migratory Bird Day 2026 at Lutembe Bay Ramsar Site Full Report.

Participants: 30

Species recorded: 52 species

As the world marked Global Big Birding Day and World Migratory Bird Day 2026, Birders Lens proudly joined fellow conservationists, birders, and nature enthusiasts at Lutembe Bay Ramsar Site for a memorable day dedicated to bird conservation, environmental education, and community engagement.

The event, hosted by the Avian Conservation Uganda Society, attracted over 30 participants from different walks of life, all brought together by a shared passion for birds and wetlands conservation. For Birders Lens, the gathering was more than just a birding activity; it was an opportunity to connect people to nature while promoting awareness about migratory birds and the importance of protecting critical habitats such as Lutembe Bay.

The day began with introductions and a briefing session led by Blessed Isaac Olupot, who educated participants about migratory birds and the ecological significance of Lutembe Bay as one of Uganda's internationally recognized wetland ecosystems. Participants were introduced to the role wetlands play in supporting both resident and migratory bird populations, especially during seasonal movements across continents.

Soon after the briefing, participants boarded local boats and set off onto the calm waters of the bay. The morning quickly came alive with exciting sightings, beginning with the Striated Heron, one of the first birds observed during the excursion. The atmosphere on the boats reflected curiosity, excitement, and continuous learning as participants exchanged observations and identification tips.

One of the most engaging moments came during discussions about the Pied Kingfisher, where Mr Ampeire guided participants through identification features between male and female birds. He also explained the species' unique hovering hunting technique, which fascinated many first-time participants witnessing the behavior in the wild.

The learning experience continued with discussions on the African Jacana, led by Blessed Isaac Olupot. Commonly known as the "lily trotter," the species sparked interest due to its unusual breeding behavior. Participants learned how the female African Jacana mates with multiple males while the male assumes responsibility for nest building, incubation, and raising the chicks. The discussion became one of the highlights of the day, showcasing how birding creates opportunities for deeper appreciation of wildlife behavior and ecology.

Throughout the boat ride, participants recorded several remarkable species including White-browed Coucal, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, African Skimmer, Gray-hooded Gull, Long-toed Lapwing, Spur-winged Lapwing, Spur-winged Goose, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Black Heron, Northern Brown-throated Weaver, and Black-headed Weaver among others.

A particularly emotional moment unfolded when participants encountered a dead immature Gray-hooded Gull resting on one of the mudflats. The sighting prompted conversations about the harsh realities birds face in their natural environments. Participants reflected on possible causes, including territorial conflicts or injuries involving larger wetland birds. A moment of silence and reflection was observed, reminding everyone present that conservation extends beyond admiration of wildlife to understanding the challenges species encounter daily.

The encounter also sparked a lively identification discussion initiated by one of the participants, Allan, regarding whether the bird observed was a Gray-hooded Gull, Caspian Tern, or Whiskered Tern. Through collaborative observation and field analysis, participants defended their viewpoints before collectively agreeing on the identification as a Gray-hooded Gull. Such moments demonstrated the value of birding as a platform for practical learning, teamwork, and sharpening observation skills.

As participants enjoyed breakfast on the lake, discussions shifted toward bird migration and its global importance. Conversations explored why birds migrate, how they navigate thousands of kilometers across continents, different forms of migration, and examples of migratory species observed at Lutembe Bay. The discussions reinforced the significance of World Migratory Bird Day as a global reminder of the need to conserve migratory pathways and wetland habitats.

By the end of the excursion, the group had successfully recorded a total of 51 bird species, highlighting the incredible biodiversity supported by Lutembe Bay Ramsar Site. The species checklist reflected not only a successful birding experience but also the importance of continued conservation awareness around Uganda's wetlands.

The event concluded with recognition awards presented to Lukongo Tree Conservancy, young birder Real Owomugisha, and Mr Alnoor Gangli for their contribution and support toward conservation initiatives.

As Birders Lens, we remain committed to supporting conservation-driven activities that inspire people to appreciate birds, protect habitats, and connect with nature through meaningful experiences. Events such as Global Big Birding Day and World Migratory Bird Day continue to remind us that conservation begins with awareness, education, and collective action.

Through every sighting, discussion, and shared experience on the waters of Ltembe Bay, the day stood as a powerful reminder that birds connect ecosystems, countries, and people across the world.