

# Mozambique 30/10-11/11 2011



Nyati Lodge, Saõ Sebastiaõ

## Introduction

This former Portuguese colony, with a bad history of a recent civil war, is not a well visited area for bird watching. This was fully clear when my non birding, but wildlife interested wife came up with this as our autumn destination for 2011.

Searching the internet for trip reports, bird guides and other what-to-do and what-to-see activities resulted in almost nothing.

Because we both have had quite a tough working period just before our leave this was more like a real family vacation in the end. That meant less local activities than expected. For example, we had the intention of rent a car and drive our selves. Nothing we tried, though it is possible. Not much of traffic, almost no signs of military activity or police ditto and the roads not as bad as expected. Your hotel can easily arrange this if you wish.

This trip was bought from the Swedish agency Sydafrikaresor [www.sydafrikaresor.se](http://www.sydafrikaresor.se) web page only in Swedish. They organized with flights and hotel when we had decided to go to Vilanculos, a small seaside town about 700 km north of Maputo, the capitol city of Mozambique.

The total cost for flights and room, with breakfast included, ended up with 2840 Euros each. We flew with SAS to London and then with the excellent South African Airways to Jo'burg. The last leg we flew with Mozambique Air

to Vilanculos, with a short stopover in Inhambane. The return flight was directly from Vilanculos to Jo'burg.

We stayed at the excellent Hotel Casa Rex, just 15 minutes from the airport. It is situated in the northern outskirts of the town, quietly and with a marvelous view over the Indian Ocean and just a short walk down the stairs to the beach. Their webpage even advertised for bird watching. This makes sense with the National Park of Bazaruto just 45 minutes boat drive away and good bird knowledge in the reception.

Our room had a safe and a refrigerator, a nice balcony and was very clean and well maintained. The restaurant served excellent food. All the staff was very friendly and service minded. The ladies in the reception arranged our local trips, booked boats and cars and really looked after us and other guests. We can really recommend a stay here.

### **Cost**

The price level on some stuff was chocking. For example is petrol both for cars and the oil mixed version for boats were expensive and that means on EU level. We paid \$2.30/liter petrol on the boat trips. Unleaded petrol was about \$2.00/liter.

Also the prices in the "supermarkets" were higher than expected on most articles.

The taxes in Mozambique are 17%.

We had almost all our meals at the hotel and a dinner cost about half to one third compared with a meal on a Swedish restaurant.

### **Health**

Malaria occurs, we took prophylaxis but did not notice more than a few mosquitoes. Probably a bigger problem in the rainy season

No other precautions than common sense are to be made. Our hotel had water from there own well. We did not drink it, but brushed our teeth with that water and had no problems.

### **Visa**

A tourist visa lasting 30 days can be arranged upon arrival. In November 2011 the cost was USD85. No departure fee is to be paid any longer. Remember that your passport must be valid 60 days after arrival back home again.

## **Literature and guides**

I used the **Sasol guide Birds of Southern Africa**, third edition. For a number of species I found out that they were not to be seen in the areas we visited when looking at the maps. Maybe the recently edited fourth edition is updated, but I have not seen that one. Also was the description of habitat for some species a little misleading, but one has to remember that Mozambique is under birded and the space for text in a field guide is limited.

Not many species of mammals was seen but I used **A Field Guide to Mammals of Southern Africa**, Chris & Tilde Stuart, third edition 2001.

A few localities around Vilanculos are described in the excellent **Southern African Birdfinder**, Cohen, Spottiswoode et al.

To find a local bird guide for Vilanculos in advance was impossible. When walking along the beach the second day there was suddenly a local young man with a worn out field guide in his hand. I stopped and talked to him, wrote down his telephone number though he said he had some good areas to show. He also keeps an eye on the rather tricky Mangrove Kingfisher. I decided to give him a try a few mornings later. We birded together both morning and afternoon the only day it was raining during our stay. To be honest he had only been doing this for about a year and still has a lot to learn. He showed me the small pond as well as the Mangrove Kingfisher. One must know about the right tide to have a fair chance for this species.

***If anyone is going there: Use his services, bring him a better field guide and also a pair of bins. These local guides need all encourage we can give them.***

His name is Knowledge, cell phone +258 829346380 or ask for him on at any of the resorts, as for example Casa Rex or the nearby Beach Lodge.

For the boat trips Casa Rex used Big Blue and they were very good. Professional during our snorkeling in a rather rough sea, my wife enjoyed it – I didn't. We had the same two men crew on both our trips, they did not know much about birds except "fish-eagle, osprey and flamingos". That's enough to bring a birder to the right areas in search of a target species like Crab Plover. Instead they knew the mammal life at sea very good.

## Sites

Below listed are the areas we birded and mentioned in the species list, with a short description how to get there, habitat and what to expect to see. *There is also one birding area worth to mention that I had the intention to visit, but didn't and that is the Save River, about 2 hours drive north of Vilanculos. This site is described in Southern African Birdfinder and if one can put that area into a schedule, maybe with an overnight stay in a nearby hotel/lodge it is probably well worth the visit.*

## Vilanculos

The main habitat around our hotel was most like suburbia with smaller areas of open landscape, low bush and scrub between the beach and the settlements. When reaching the less inhabited areas in the outskirts of the town it was mostly thornveld with some bigger trees and of course mixed with both new and older cultivated land.

We made fairly long walks from Casa Rex both to the north and the south along the beach or on paved and gravel roads close to the sea. Walking to the north it's just to follow the main paved road and bird in gardens and other open areas.

An interesting area was when arriving to the sign for "Vilanculos Conference Center" (on the right side when walking out of town). Leave the main road to the right and then follow the gravel road to the left. In this area there are several smaller areas with interesting species like **Cut-throat**, **Green-winged Pytilia**, several observations of **Brown-headed Parrot**, **Magpie Mannikin**, a **Southern Masked-weaver** colony in a Casuarina stand and **Lemon-breasted Canary** to mention a few. Continue this gravel road as far as possible and then turn back to the main road.

When the surface on the main road ends keep right and continue (with grassland on the right hand) some hundred meters. Keep an eye to the left and a small, but easily seen, pond appears. In the thornveld behind and around the pond there is quite good bird watching. This was the only site we encountered **Madagascar Bee-eater** around Vilanculos. Check also the scrub towards the sea. There are smaller tracks leading down to the beach from the gravel road as well as around the pond. This is the pond mentioned in the species list together with Vilanculos. The walk from Casa Rex was about 2-3 km one way.

Walking to the other direction from Casa Rex is past a small harbor and the recently built hotel Dona Ana. The walk leads towards the Dhow (type of boat) companies, Vilanculos camping site, Baobab Beach and finally reaching the mangrove. This walk was as long as the other (at least) but not as rewarding from a bird perspective. A few pairs of **Gray Heron** and one pair **Black (Yellow-billed) Kite** was breeding in the Casuarina trees at the camping site. A pair of **Red-backed Mannikin**, several **Red-billed Firefinch**, **Village Indigobird** and good numbers with both **Lemon-breasted** and **Brimstone (Bully) Canary** was seen, to mention some.

The hotel garden at Casa Rex was not big but a dead tree in front of our balcony was a magnet with more than 20 species seen resting or singing from there. Several more species were seen flying by or in the small corridor of sea side forest and scrub between the sea and the hotel grounds. Birds seen here included **Spectacled Weaver**, **Magpie Mannikin**, **Lilac-breasted Roller**, **Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird**, **Tropical Boubou**, **Sombre Greenbul** and **White-throated Robin-chat** to name some.

### **Bazaruto National Park**

This site is a number of islands of which the three bigger ones are Bazaruto, Benguerra and Marguruque. On Bazaruto there is a local population of about 2000 inhabitants. There are also a couple of fresh water lakes with a small population of crocodiles. We asked the local warden to walk with us to one of the lakes and he accepted. Though it was in the middle of the day not many birds were seen. We noted quite a few small dark sunbirds, either Purple-banded or Neergaard's, but time and light conditions gave me no chance to identify these. A small colony of **Madagascar (Olive) Bee-eater** was breeding close to the small "harbor". A few **Yellow Weaver** and **Fan-tailed Widowbird** were seen on the walk to the lake.

On Benguerra there are several lodges which could be an alternative to stay overnight for an early morning walk in search of birds, like for example Black-headed Apalis. At low tide the shores are more like mudflats, at least on the north western part. The area to scan is quite big and the numbers of waders are huge, so a short visit is not the optimal planning.



One of the fresh water lakes on Bazaruto island.

On a day trip there is also a small chance of seeing the rare Dugong. We did not, but we saw two species of dolphins, a rather big turtle and quite a big number of rays. Not a clue what species but quite small, could be Jenkin's Whipray.

Whale watching is also a possibility out here but earlier in the autumn is a better time for those huge mammals.

### **Saõ Sebastião**

This site is a huge area of sandbars and mudflats at low tide, which means waders, waders and even more waders mixed with terns, egrets and flamingos. This site is only reachable by boat from Vilanculos. Out there is also the wonderful Nyati Lodge placed, where one can stay overnight and explore the surroundings early in the morning if that could be included in the itinerary. It takes about 45-60 minutes with a speed boat to reach the lodge area, depending on the tide. There are many sandbars and muddy shores to scan in search of birds. We noted **Greater Flamingo**, an **African Fish-eagle** territory, a small group of **Pink-backed Pelican**, **Avocet** and loads of waders, including **Crab Plover** to name some.

## **Govuro Ponds**

This site is a few lily covered ponds of different sizes just beside the main road on the way to Inhassoru. It is just a 20 minute drive from Vilanculos city centre. They have no local name and as are they situated just before the bridge over Govuro River this would be a suitable name for them. They are also named like this in the Southern African Birdfinder. The smaller ones are almost completely covered with lilies, but the bigger one has clear water. This was by far the best birding area we found close to Vilanculos. We visited the ponds one afternoon and one early morning. The bird list could probably been even more impressive if we would have visited this site a few more times. Nice species was **Lesser Jacana** (at least one seen in each of the smaller lily covered ponds), **African Pygmy-Goose, Rufous-bellied Heron, Black Egret** and on top an adult **Allen's Gallinule**, to name a few. The surroundings on the other side of the road is also well worth checking as well as the small board of trees between the open grassland and the road.

Light conditions are not the best early in the morning but with more time I think it is possible walk around and view the ponds from the opposite side.

## **Govuro River**

This site was just shortly visited as we were passing by. We birded from the bridge over the river on our way in to the small town of Inhassouro. (The road crosses Govuro River also just shortly after the above described ponds (but it is not that bridge.)

As this was almost in the middle of the day not much was seen. An early morning and scanning the reed beds along the river might be much more productive than our visit was.

***I decided not to write a daily log, one can easily figure out when we did our few trips. The rest of the days we walked in and around Vilanculos.***

## **Species list**

**Note** that the bird names follow the Sasol guide Birds of Southern Africa (Sinclair, Hockey&Tarboton) third edition and is not always the same as in Clements checklist, sixth edition.

The order follows Clements (because my software does).

A total of 163 species were recorded.

**White-faced Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna viduata*)

40 Govuro River, Inhassouro 7/11, 30 Govuro Ponds 7/11 and at least 70 there 10/11.

**White-backed Duck** (*Thalassornis leuconotus*)

Up to 10 seen on both visits to Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**African Pygmy-goose** (*Nettapus auritus*)

25-30 seen on both visits to Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**Crested Francolin** (*Francolinus sephaena*)

2 heard calling early in the morning Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Red-necked Francolin** (*Francolinus afer*)

2 heard from an area of low forest behind the pond, Vilanculos 2/11. Checked with my MP3 sound on spot and it sure was Red-necked calling. When asking the guide about this species he said that they he sees them in the area from time to time.

**Harlequin Quail** (*Coturnix delegorguei*)

1 heard calling early in the morning Govuro Ponds 10/11. The call was rather similar to Common Quail but more metallic than and not as penetrating as I am is used too from home.

**Little Grebe** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

1 in the pond Vilanculos 2/11 and 2 Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Greater Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus roseus*)

8+15 Bazaruto N.P.4/11, around 400 near Dugong Lodge and at least 700 Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Pink-backed Pelican** (*Pelecanus rufescens*)

6 adult in non breeding plumage on the Benguerra Island, Bazaruto N.P. 4/11, 11 immature near Dugong Lodge 9/11 and 3 feeding and later flying off from Govuro Ponds 10/11.

The first group was roosting on north-western tip on the island and seen at close range. They were clearly showing pink bill with orange-yellow tip, white orbital skin and a grayish back. The 11 immature birds were roosting

on a sandbar. They all had pink bills and were more grey than brown on the back. Probably third calendar year birds.



Greater Flamingo

**White-breasted (Great) Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax carbo lucidus*)

Fairly common on the boat trips.

Treated as subspecies of Great Cormorant by Clements.

**Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax africanus*)

Around 50-75 pairs breeding in the pond, Vilanculos. Seen flying on and off between the breeding site and the Bazaruto island's freshwater lakes. Also seen in small numbers Govuro River, Inhassouro and Govuro Ponds.

**African Darter** (*Anhinga melanogaster rufa*)

Up to 6 were seen at Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**Gray Heron** (*Ardea cinerea*)

5-8 pairs breeding in the Casuarina trees at the camping site Vilanculos, 1 Govuro Ponds 7/11, 5 close to Dugong Lodge and 35 Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Black-headed Heron** (*Ardea melanocephala*)

1 adult passing our hotel on several dates and 1 Bazaruto N.P. 4/11.

**Purple Heron** (*Ardea purpurea*)

Up to 3 seen at the pond Vilanculos and up to 5 Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**Great Egret** (*Ardea alba*)

1 Bazaruto N.P. 4/11, 3 near Dugong Lodge 9/11 and 5 Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Yellow-billed (Intermediate) Egret** (*Mesophoyx intermedia*)

2 at the freshwater lake on Bazaruto 4/11.

As for the previous species – probably much overlooked, mainly because of light, distance and often feeding in and around wetlands with high grass and reed.

**Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*)

Common.

**Black Heron** (*Egretta ardesiaca*)

2 Govuro Ponds 10/11 was a surprise.

**Cattle Egret** (*Bubulcus ibis*)

Only 10 roadside birds seen between Vilanculos-Inhassouro 7/11.

**Squacco Heron** (*Ardeola ralloides*)

Up to 8 seen Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**Rufous-bellied Heron** (*Ardeola rufiventris*)

Up to 4 seen Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

1 adult passing over the pond Vilanculos 2/11.

**African Sacred Ibis** (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*)

4 seen Benguerra island, Bazaruto N.P. 4/11 and 9 close to Dugong Lodge 9/11.

**African Openbill** (*Anastomus lamelligerus*)

5 seen Benguerra island, Bazaruto N.P. 4/11, 7 Govuro River, Inhassouro 7/11 and 1 Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Woolly-necked Stork** (*Ciconia episcopus*)

1 Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*)

2 near Dugong Lodge 9/11 and 1 Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Yellow-billed (Black) Kite** (*Milvus (migrans) parasitus*)

Fairly common and the only raptor seen regularly.

Still treated as a race of Black Kite by Clements.

**African Fish-Eagle** (*Haliaeetus vocifer*)

1 adult near Dugong Lodge 9/11 and 1 immature Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**African Marsh-Harrier** (*Circus ranivorus*)

1 female colored Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**African Harrier-Hawk** (*Polyboroides typus*)

1 immature passing Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Martial Eagle** (*Polemaetus bellicosus*)

1 adult passing our hotel 1/11.

**Red-chested Flufftail** (*Sarothrura rufa*)

1 calling Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Black Crake** (*Amauornis flavirostra*)

At least 2 heard calling from the reeds around the pond, Vilanculos.

**(African) Purple Swamphen** (*Porphyrio porphyrio*)

1 in the pond, Vilanculos 3/11 and 1 Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**Allen's Gallinule** (*Porphyrio alleni*)

1 adult seen very well Govuro Ponds 7/11 was a nice surprise.

**Common Moorhen** (*Gallinula chloropus*)

1 heard calling at the pond, Vilanculos 3/11.

**Grey (Black-bellied) Plover** (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Common. Around Saõ Sebastiaõ several hundreds were seen.

**Lesser Sand-Plover** (*Charadrius mongolus*)

1 Bazaruto N.P. 4/11 and about 20 was seen Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

As for the next species probably much over looked, although the main numbers maybe arrives later in the Mozambique summer.

**Greater Sand-Plover** (*Charadrius leschenaultii*)

Just a few seen on the beach Vilanculos, 10 seen Bazaruto N.P. 4/11 and about 50 Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Common Ringed Plover** (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Very common, especially around Bazaruto N.P and Saõ Sebastiaõ.

**White-fronted Plover** (*Charadrius marginatus*)

1 Vilanculos 1/11 and 1 Bazaruto N.P. 4/11 were the only records.

**Crab Plover** (*Dromas ardeola*)

3 Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.



Crab Plover

**Eurasian Oystercatcher** (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

5 seen on the island of Benguerra, Bazaruto N.P. 4/11.

**Pied Avocet** (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

40 Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

According to the Sasol guide, third edition, they are not supposed to be in this area of Mozambique.



The whole group of Avocets.

**Lesser Jacana** (*Microparra capensis*)

2 Govuro Ponds 7/11 and 3 there 10/11.

**African Jacana** (*Actophilornis africanus*)

1 in the pond, Vilanculos 5/11, 10 Govuro River, Inhassouro 7/11 and at least 70 on both visits to Govuro Ponds 7/11.

**Common Sandpiper** (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

2 near Baobab beach, Vilanculos 2/11.

Not as common as expected.

**Common Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*)

A few on the beach Vilanculos. At least 100 Bazaruto N.P. 4/11 and 50 Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Marsh Sandpiper** (*Tringa stagnatilis*)

1 seen on the island of Benguerra, Bazaruto N.P. 4/11.

**Wood Sandpiper** (*Tringa glareola*)

Up to 10 seen Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**Common Redshank** (*Tringa totanus*)

3 Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Common. At Saõ Sebastiaõ there was one part of a mudflat with about 300 Whimbrel, so there must have been thousands in the area.

**Eurasian Curlew** (*Numenius arquata*)

1 along the beach at our hotel during the whole stay.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*)

1-2 on the beach Vilanculos, 10 Benguerra island, Bazaruto N.P.4/11 and 10 Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Ruddy Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*)

Common.

**Sanderling** (*Calidris alba*)

Common. Thousands around Bazaruto N.P. and Saõ Sebastiaõ.

**Little Stint** (*Calidris minuta*)

A minimum of 100 were seen on the island of Benguerra, Bazaruto N.P. 4/11.

**Curlew Sandpiper** (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Very Common. Thousands, maybe ten of thousands around Bazaruto N.P. and Saõ Sebastiaõ.

**Collared Pratincole** (*Glareola pratincola*)

1 Govuro Ponds 7/11.

**Gray-hooded Gull** (*Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*)

Up to 6 seen along the beach at our hotel on several dates and about 25 on the boat trip to Bazaruto N.P.4/11.

Less common than expected.

**Little Tern** (*Sternula albifrons*)

About 15 seen over the sea, probably migrating, between Vilanculos and Dugong Lodge 9/11.

**Caspian Tern** (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

2 Benguerra, Bazaruto N.P. 4/11, 2 Dugong Lodge and 40 Saõ Sebastião 9/11.

**White-winged Tern** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*)

2 Govuro Ponds 7/11 and 30 ex there 10/11.

**Common Tern** (*Sterna hirundo*)

2 Bazaruto N.P. 4/11 and 20 over the sea together with the Little Terns 9/11.

**Swift (Great Crested) Tern** (*Thalasseus bergii*)

A few seen a couple of times along the beach Vilanculos, 25 Bazaruto N.P. 4/11 and 130 Saõ Sebastião 9/11.

**Lesser Crested Tern** (*Thalasseus bengalensis*)

A few seen a couple of times along the beach Vilanculos and 8 Bazaruto N.P. Mocambique 4/11.

**Domestic Dove** (*Columba livia domestica*)

Fairly common Vilanculos town centre.

**Red-eyed Dove** (*Streptopelia semitorquata*)

Fairly common. A little more common than the next species.

**Cape Turtle (Ring-necked) Dove** (*Streptopelia capicola*)

Fairly common.

**Laughing Dove** (*Streptopelia senegalensis*)

Common. The most commonly seen dove.

**Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove** (*Turtur chalcospilos*)

Fairly common. Mainly seen and heard in the outskirts of town, especially in the area around the pond.

**African Green-Pigeon** (*Treron calvus*)

1 roadside bird north of the Inhassouro crossing 7/11.

**Brown-headed Parrot** (*Poicephalus cryptoxanthus*)

Seen on four dates, two times passing through our hotel garden. Highest number was 8 seen early in the morning 8/11 in gardens around Vilanculos Conference Center. Otherwise only seen as a single bird or a pair. Probably have a status closer to scarce than fairly common.

**Red-chested Cuckoo** (*Cuculus solitarius*)

3 singing birds heard between Vilanculos-Inhassouro 7/11.

**Black Cuckoo** (*Cuculus clamosus*)

1 heard between Vilanculos-Inhassouro 7/11 and 1 heard in the morning from the wood opposite Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Dideric Cuckoo** (*Chrysococcyx caprius*)

Fairly common.

**Burchell's Coucal** (*Centropus superciliosus*)

Fairly common, also in gardens in and around the town.

Threatened as a subspecies of White-browed Coucal by Clements.



Burchell's Coucal

**Square-tailed Nightjar** (*Caprimulgus fossii*)

1 heard from our veranda Vilanculos a couple of nights, also 1 bird flushed on day roost at the pond 2/11.

**Little Swift** (*Apus affinis*)

50 Govuro River, Inhassouro 7/11.

**African Palm-Swift** (*Cypsiurus parvus*)

A few pairs seen in and around Vilanculos on several dates.

**Speckled Mousebird** (*Colius striatus*)

Common.



Speckled Mousebird

**Red-faced Mousebird** (*Urocolius indicus*)

4 roadside birds between Vilanculos-Inhassouro 7/11.

**Malachite Kingfisher** (*Alcedo cristata*)

1 at the pond, Vilanculos 2/11.

**Mangrove Kingfisher** (*Halcyon senegaloides*)

1 near Baobab beach, Vilanculos 2/11.

A tricky species to find, we had very good help of the local guide who keeps an eye on this species.

**Brown-hooded Kingfisher** (*Halcyon albiventris*)

Fairly common.

**Striped Kingfisher** (*Halcyon chelicuti*)

Fairly common.

**Pied Kingfisher** (*Ceryle rudis*)

2 at the pond Vilanculos 8/11 and a flock of 8 Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Little Bee-eater** (*Merops pusillus*)

Fairly common.

**Madagascar Bee-eater** (*Merops superciliosus*)

Up to 5 seen Vilanculos on several dates and only in the area around the pond. Also 20 at a breeding site on the island of Bazaruto 4/11.

In no way common as the Southern African Birdfinder mention, at least not in the parts of Vilanculos where we birded.



Madagascar Bee-eater

**Lilac-breasted Roller** (*Coracias caudatus*)

A common bird in the outskirts of Vilanculos as well as a roadside bird. Very often seen perched on wires.

**Broad-billed Roller** (*Eurystomus glaucurus*)

2 roadside birds north of the Inhassouro crossing 7/11.

**Eurasian Hoopoe** (*Upupa epops*)

Up to 3 pairs seen around the pond Vilanculos, also 1 on the island of Bazaruto 4/11 and 1 near Baobab beach on one date.

**Crowned Hornbill** (*Tockus alboterminatus*)

1 Nyati Lodge, Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Trumpeter Hornbill** (*Ceratogymna bucinator*)

4 (2+1+1) roadside birds north of the Inhassouro crossing 7/11.

**Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird** (*Pogoniulus bilineatus*)

A few heard calling around Vilanculos.

**Black-collared Barbet** (*Lybius torquatus*)

Fairly common.

**Lesser Honeyguide** (*Indicator minor*)

1 pair in the outskirts of Vilanculos 2/11.

I don't know if the local guide knew of this pair or we just stumbled into them. Anyway, I was not able to find them again on my own. When asking about this species I got the apprehension that it was seen regularly.

**Pale Batis** (*Batis soror*)

A female seen in the wood opposite Govuro Ponds 10/11, when I tried a little playback the male responded but did not show up.

**Black-backed Puffback** (*Dryoscopus cubla*)

A few pairs seen around the pond, Vilanculos on several dates.

**Black-crowned Tchagra** (*Tchagra senegalus*)

A few seen and heard in the area around the pond, Vilanculos on several dates.

**Brown-crowned Tchagra** (*Tchagra australis*)

Seen in the same area as previous species but appeared a little bit more common.

**Tropical Boubou** (*Laniarius aethiopicus*)

A few seen and heard. Only well outside town center.

**Southern Boubou** (*Laniarius ferrugineus*)

Fairly common in well vegetated gardens, also inside town center.

**Orange-breasted Bushshrike** (*Telophorus sulfureopectus*)

2-3 seen and heard on several dates in the area around the pond, Vilanculos.

**White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina pectoralis*)

1 nicely perched bird seen north of the Inhassouro crossing 7/11 was really a bonus bird.

**African Black-headed Oriole** (*Oriolus larvatus*)

2 heard singing at Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Fork-tailed Drongo** (*Dicrurus adsimilis*)

Only 2 roadside birds seen between Vilanculos-Inhassouro 7/11.

**Pied Crow** (*Corvus albus*)

Fairly common.

**Rufous-naped Lark** (*Mirafraga africana*)

1 pair Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Bank Swallow** (*Riparia riparia*)

6 migrating south Vilanculos 1/11 and 15 migrating Vilanculos 3/11. Also 5 Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Barn Swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*)

Common. We had the feeling that most of them were on migration, numbers differed quite a lot from day to day.

**Lesser Striped-Swallow** (*Cecropis abyssinica*)

5 Govuro River, Inhassouro 7/11.

**Common House-Martin** (*Delichon urbicum*)

3 between Vilanculos-Inhassouro 7/11.

**African Penduline-Tit** (*Anthoscopus caroli*)

1 pair in the area near the pond Vilanculos 8/11 was really a big surprise. While looking at sunbirds I suddenly had a tiny grey bird in my bins, tried a little playback to confirm my id skills and immediately I had two birds trying to chase away the trespasser.

**Common Bulbul** (*Pycnonotus barbatus*)

Very common.



Common Bulbul

**Sombre Greenbul** (*Andropadus importunus*)

Common.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis** (*Apalis flavida*)

Just a few heard singing.

**Green-backed Camaroptera** (*Camaroptera brachyura*)

Only 2 birds seen or heard Vilanculos.

Maybe already breeding!

**Rattling Cisticola** (*Cisticola chiniana*)

Common.

**Rufous-winged Cisticola** (*Cisticola galactotes*)

A few around the pond, Vilanculos, 1 at the freshwater lake Bazaruto island 4/11 and 5 Govuro Ponds 10/11.

Treated as a subspecies of, and also named Winding Cisticola, by Clements.

**Neddicky** (*Cisticola fulvicapilla*)

A few heard in the area around Govuro Ponds 10/11.

Clements name this species Piping Cisticola.

**Tawny-flanked Prinia** (*Prinia subflava*)

Common.

**Red-faced Crombec** (*Sylvietta whytii*)

1 or 2 birds seen near the small pond, Vilanculos 2/11.

**Cape Crombec** (*Sylvietta rufescens*)

1 seen and heard in the area around the pond Vilanculos on a couple of dates.

**Southern Black-Flycatcher** (*Melaenornis pammelaina*)

Common.



Southern Black Flycatcher

**White-throated Robin-Chat** (*Cossypha humeralis*)

1 pair in our hotel garden and also one pair near the camping site a few hundred meters south of the new Hotel Dona Ana.

**White-browed Scrub-Robin** (*Cercotrichas leucophrys*)

2-3 pairs seen in the area around the pond, Vilanculos on several dates and also 1 pair Govuro Ponds 10/11.

Named Red-backed Scrub-robin by Clements.

**Greater Blue-eared Glossy-Starling** (*Lamprotornis chalybaeus*)

1 Vilanculos town center 6/11 and 3 roadside birds between Vilanculos-Inhassouro 7/11.

**Violet-backed Starling** (*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*)

Single males or pairs seen on several locations in and around Vilanculos and also 2 roadside males between Vilanculos-Inhassouro 7/11.

**Collared Sunbird** (*Hedydipna collaris*)

Fairly common.

**Amethyst Sunbird** (*Chalcomitra amethystina*)

Common.

**Scarlet-chested Sunbird** (*Chalcomitra senegalensis*)

Up to 5 birds seen along the dirt road past the pond, Vilanculos 11 /11. Besides that only one pair was seen, in the area close to the pond.

**Neergaard's Sunbird** (*Cinnyris neergaardi*)

1 male in the outskirts of Vilanculos 8/11.

After looking at dozens of purple-banded and mariquas we succeeded to positively id a male. It's really a challenge though very good light conditions are needed and those opportunities are seldom given.

**Mariqua Sunbird** (*Cinnyris mariquensis*)

A few was positively identified.

**Purple-banded Sunbird** (*Cinnyris bifasciatus*)

Common.

**White-bellied Sunbird** (*Cinnyris talatala*)

A few seen, mainly in the area around the pond, Vilanculos.

**Cape Wagtail** (*Motacilla capensis*)

1 seen for a minute at Nyati Lodge, Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

According to the sasol guide, third edition Cape Wagtail are not to be seen this far north in Mocambique. The observation was at close range and no sign of a white wing panel makes the id simple. Maybe this species is expanding northwards.

**African Pied Wagtail** (*Motacilla aguimp*)

Only one was seen on two dates, probably the same individual. The second time it was feeding around the pool in our hotel garden.

**African Pipit** (*Anthus cinnamomeus*)

3 Govuro Ponds 10/11.

**Yellow-throated Longclaw** (*Macronyx croceus*)

1 permant pair around the pond, Vilanculos. 1 bird flushed on Bazaruto Island 4/11 and at least 2 pairs Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**Golden-breasted Bunting** (*Emberiza flaviventris*)

1 singing adult male seen in a new cropland behind the pond Vilanculos 11/11.

**Yellow-fronted Canary** (*Serinus mozambicus*)

Fairly common but undoubtedly the least common canary.

**Lemon-breasted Canary** (*Serinus citrinpectus*)

Fairly common in open areas inside Vilanculos, around the camping site and probably the most common canary in and around the town. Always small parties of 1-2 pairs (breeding time!) but on a few occasions up to 10 birds were seen together.

**Brimstone Canary** (*Serinus sulphuratus*)

Common. Often in the same areas as previous species.



Lemon-breasted Canary

**House Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*)

Too common.

**Southern Gray-headed Sparrow** (*Passer diffusus*)

1 pair seen on two occasions in the outskirts of the town.

**Spectacled Weaver** (*Ploceus ocularis*)

Fairly common, often detected by their very characteristic song.

**Yellow Weaver** (*Ploceus subaureus*)

Only seen near the fresh water lake on Bazaruto island, where about 10 were seen 4/11.

Clements call this species African Golden-Weaver.

**Southern Masked-Weaver** (*Ploceus velatus*)

Common. At least one fairly big colony is to be found in Casuarina trees near Vilanculos Conference Center.

**Red-billed Quelea** (*Quelea quelea*)

1 seen in the thornveld behind the pond, Vilanculos 11/11.

**Fan-tailed Widowbird** (*Euplectes axillaris*)

3 adult males on Bazaruto island 4/11 and up to 3 transitional males seen

Govuro Ponds 7 and 10/11.

**Thick-billed Weaver** (*Amblyospiza albifrons*)

1-2 female colored birds seen on 3 occasions in the outskirts of Vilanculos. One observation north of town center towards the pond and the other 2 on the way towards Baobab Beach.

Named Grosbeak Weaver by Clements.

**Common Waxbill** (*Estrilda astrild*)

Common.

**Blue Waxbill** (*Uraeginthus angolensis*)

Fairly common.

Named Blue-breasted Cordonbleu by Clements.

**Green-winged Pytilia** (*Pytilia melba*)

1 pair near the Conference Center, Vilanculos 3/11 and 1 pair at the pond, Vilanculos 8/11.

**Red-billed Firefinch** (*Lagonosticta senegala*)

Fairly common.

**Cut-throat Finch** (*Amadina fasciata*)

1 pair Vilanculos 8/11 and 2 pairs at same spot 10/11.

A species I had not expected to find.



A pair of Cut-throat Finch

**Bronze Mannikin** (*Spermestes cucullatus*)

Very common.

**Red-backed Mannikin** (*Spermestes nigriceps*)

1 pair near Baobab Beach, Vilanculos 5/11 and 2 pairs together with other mannikins in the outskirts of Vilanculos 10/11.

Named Black-and White Mannikin by Clements.

**Magpie Mannikin** (*Spermestes fringilloides*)

Fairly common in small flocks up to 20 birds.

According to the sasol guide, third edition it is not obvious that they are to be seen in this area of Mozambique. Probably expanding from the south.



Magpie Mannikin

**Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah** (*Vidua interjecta*)

1 singing male seen north of the Inhassouro crossing 7/11.

**Village Indigobird** (*Vidua chalybeata*)

Fairly common in the outskirts of Vilanculos, always in the same areas as Red-billed Firefinch. A few singing transitional males seen, the rest of the observations was of female colored birds.

**Mammals**

English names and order follows *Field Guide to Mammals of Southern*

**Africa**, Chris & Tilde Stuart, third edition 2001.

**Vervet Monkey** (*Chlorocebus aethiops*)

5 seen at Nyati Lodge, Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Tree Squirrel** (*Paraxerus cepapi*)

1 seen in the hotel garden twice.

**Slender Mongoose** (*Galarella sanguinea*)

1 seen at the pond, Vilanculos 11/11.

**Humpback Dolphin** (*Sousa plumbea*)

A group of 6 seen during the boat ride towards Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

**Indian Ocean Bottlenosed Dolphin** (*Tursiops aduncus*)

3 seen during the boat ride towards Saõ Sebastiaõ 9/11.

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