



Namibia is a great place for bird and mammal photography. Here, a calling male Northern Black Korhaan in all its glory! (Dani Lopez-Velasco. All photos in the report by the same author)

NAMIBIA & THE OKAVANGO

5 – 22 NOVEMBER 2014

LEADERS: DANI LOPEZ VELASCO and STEVE BRAINE

This year's Birdquest tour to Namibia and the Okavango was one of our most successful ever, producing virtually all of the bird specialties that we could reasonably expect, together with many fantastic mammals and some incredible scenery. Our epic journey of over 4,400 km through this fascinating region lived up to all expectations, and was remarkably trouble free, thanks to our great local guide, Steve, as well as to the excellent condition of the roads, superb accommodation and very friendly and helpful service. The weather was slightly unseasonal throughout our stay, with heavy rain on several days and temperatures way above normal, almost reaching 40°C on several occasions. Due to the rain, birds were more dispersed than usual, and several species, including White-tailed Shrikes and various nightbirds, were very thin on the ground, but perseverance and a good measure of luck combined to produce almost all of the local birds. Highlights included Rockrunner and Monteiro's Hornbill near Windhoek, Rufous-eared Warbler and White-tailed Shrike

near Namibgrens, no less than 5 Herero Chats and Cinnamon-breasted Warbler at Spreetshoogte Pass, Rüppell's Korhaan, Dune Lark, Gray's Lark and Stark's Lark (out of 12 species of larks seen!) in the Namib Desert, Crowned Cormorant, African Oystercatcher, Chestnut-banded Plover, Damara Tern and Orange River White-eye at Walvis Bay, Benguela Long-billed Lark and Burchell's Courser near Uis, Carp's Tit and Bare-cheeked Babbler at Huab, White-backed Night Heron, Rüppell's Parrot, Violet Wood Hoopoe, Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush and Cinderella Waxbill – on our last attempt-, along the Kunene River, Hartlaub's and Orange River Francolins and Burchell's Sandgrouse at Dolomite Camp, Ludwig's Bustard, Blue Crane and Pink-billed Lark at Etosha, Bradfield's Hornbill, Souza's Shrike and Rufous-bellied Tit near Rundu, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, Wattled Crane, Slaty Egret (one of three seen during the tour!) in the Mahango Game Reserve, the amazing Pel's Fishing Owl and Greater Swamp Warbler at Shakawe and Freckled Nightjar in the Erongo Mountains. As always, the tour produced an impressive selection of mammals: 50 species in all, including no less than eight Black Rhinoceroses, Roan, Sable, walk-away views of a female Cheetah with her small cubs, several Lions and a little band of Suricates (Meerkats).



A small group of Suricates (Meerkats) in the Namib desert.

We began our tour very gently, with an afternoon visit to the Avis Dam, only a few hundred metres away from our pleasant lodge on the outskirts of Windhoek. Just a few hundred metres from the car park we enjoyed great views of a pair of Monteiro's Hornbills, and in a nearby rocky outcrop we also located one of the most-wanted Namibian specialties – a singing Rockrunner – along with an assortment of commoner bush birds including Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Pririt Batis, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Ashy Tit, African Red-eyed Bulbul, Greater Striped Swallow, Long-billed Crombec, Zitting Cisticola, Black-chested Prinia, Chestnut-vented Warbler (Titbabbler), Groundscraper Thrush, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Mountain Wheatear, Familiar Chat, Marico Flycatcher, Marico and Dusky Sunbirds, Southern Masked Weaver, White-browed Sparrow-weaver, Green-winged Pytilia, Blue Waxbill, Black-faced Waxbill, Pin-tailed Whydah and Black-throated Canary. Other birds of note included a Gabar Goshawk, a pair of African Hawk-Eagles, some Bradfield's Swifts, three White-throated Swallows, a lively group of Burnt-necked Eremomelas and a pair of Cape Buntings.



Rockrunners, left, aren't always on rocks. Delightful Rosy-faced Lovebirds were seen very well on many occasions during the tour.

Before heading off south next morning, we called in at Windhoek's excellent sewage works where we found some waterbirds and shorebirds (although far less than in previous visits) including 12 South African Shelducks, Egyptian Goose, Red-billed Teal, Little Grebe, Squacco Heron, a single Hamerkop, African Darter, a few African (Purple) Swamphens, Double-banded Plovers and two African Jacanas. A nice adult male Eurasian Honey Buzzard was a surprise and a Namibian rarity. Smaller birds included two White-throated Swallows, a Pearl-breasted Swallow, several African Reed Warblers, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, at least 1,000 Wattle Starlings, four Southern Red Bishops, several Cape Wagtails and a few Yellow Canaries. Leaving Windhoek behind, we drove southwest through increasingly arid bush and semi-desert to Namibgrens Guest Farm in the Khomas Highlands. Birds encountered along the way included our first Secretarybird of the trip, a dozen Pale Chanting Goshawks, a Ludwig's Bustard, three Northern Black Korhaans, two Namaqua Sandgrouse, several groups of White-backed Mousebirds, two Lilac-breasted Rollers, a pair of Common Scimitarbills, our first Sabota, Spike-heeled and Stark's Larks, Desert Cisticola, a pair of Rufous-eared Warblers, several Chat Flycatchers, Capped Wheatear, Scaly-feathered Weaver, 100 Red-headed Finches, 2 Shaft-tailed Whydahs and about 50 Sociable Weavers at one of their huge communal stick nests. We arrived at our guest farm with plenty of time to explore the extensive garden and nearby lake, although the weather was far from good. Here we found a pair of Spotted Thick-knees, several Crowned Lapwings, a pair of Karoo Scrub Robins and a Long-billed Pipit, as well as our first of many Grey Go-away-birds, African Hoopoes, Southern Fiscals and Great Sparrows.



Karoo Scrub Robin, left, is a very localized species in Namibia. We saw a number of Ludwig's Bustards, right, during the trip.

From Namibgrens, it was only a short drive to Spreetshoogte Pass – finally catching up with a showy White-tailed Shrike on the way-, where we hoped to find the scarce and local Herero Chat. It was quite cold and breezy at the top of the pass and there was little about, but here we managed to get brief views of the scarce Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, as well as a singing Bokmakierie. As we were driving down we were fortunate to locate a nice Herero Chat sitting on a tree by the road. Wow, now that was luck, considering how elusive this chat can be. We pulled off the road and set our scopes on the bird, which was soon joined by another individual. We enjoyed full-frame views of this namibian specialty and then we drove off. As we neared the bottom of the pass, we found another pair of chats! Four magnificent Verreaux's Eagles soared overhead, while other birds in the area included several Cinnamon-breasted Buntings, a pair of Short-toed Rock Thrushes, a few Pale-winged Starlings and two White-throated Canaries. We then headed out onto the plains and made a short detour to call in at a restaurant not far from Solitaire, getting excellent views of a pair of displaying Rüppell's Korhaans on the way. Then it was time to head off on the long drive through the Namib Desert to Walvis Bay. The vegetation was still in reasonably good condition and there were quite a few birds about, including a few Ostriches, several Lappet-faced Vultures, two Pygmy Falcons, three Greater Kestrels, seven Ludwig's Bustards, two Double-banded Coursers, some Namaqua Sandgrouse, as well as a herd of 35 Mountain Zebra and some Springbok. In an area of red sand dunes, we were able to entice 4 Dune Larks into view. We arrived at Walvis Bay in time for a quick look at the bay from the esplanade, but the tide was high and there was little to be seen other than lots of Hartlaub's Gulls, a few Cape Gulls and the odd Common and Great-crested Tern.



Herero Chat, one of the key targets of the tour, proved very easy this year, with 5 birds seen.

We began the next day with a short stroll along the esplanade. There were thousands of birds about, mainly Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Cape Cormorants, Hartlaub's and Cape Gulls, Sandwich and Common Terns and small waders. After breakfast, we spent the rest of the morning checking through the large flocks of waterbirds in the bay and on the adjacent salt pans. Notable finds included 80 Cape Teal, a single Cape

Shoveler, 1000+ Black-necked Grebes, 50 Great White Pelicans, 5 distant African Oystercatchers, 100 Black-winged Stilts, 500 Pied Avocets, 100+ White-fronted Plovers, 300+ Chestnut-banded Plovers, 200+ Bar-tailed Godwits, two Marsh Sandpipers, a Terek Sandpiper, 1 Red Knot, 1000+ Sanderlings, about 500 Little Stints, at least 3000 Curlew Sandpipers, 20 Ruff, 21 Red-necked Phalaropes, 25 Caspian Terns and 20 Damara Terns. We ended up at the ocean beach for lunch, and here a short sea-watch produced 20 Sooty Shearwaters, 20 Cape Gannets, lots of Common, Sandwich and Black Terns, as well as some inquisitive Cape Fur Seals. In the afternoon, we spent some time looking for Gray's Lark in some nearby plains and ended up getting good views of a small group. Later we drove north to Swakopmund where we saw a pair of Orange River White-eyes.



As usual, there were masses of birds in Walvis Bay. Here, Pied Avocets, Black-winged Stilts, Curlew Sandpipers, Greater Flamingos and Hartlaub's Gulls.

We were on our way fairly early the next morning on the long drive to Huab Lodge. The vegetation in the desert between Henties Bay and Uis was in very poor shape and there weren't many birds around – except for Stark's Larks-, but we managed to get good looks at 3 Benguela Long-billed Larks, while our first Burcherll's Coursers were seen. Our only Suricats of the tour were also found in this area. At our lunch stop at the Ugab River, we found our first Red-face Mousebirds, Carp's Tits, Southern White-crowned Shrikes and Olive Bee-eaters, and as we approached our lodge we found a flock of Bare-cheeked Babblers and two Lark-like Buntings. Once we settled in our lovely accommodation we decided to go for a short walk before it got dark. Plenty of Olive Bee-eaters were around, but unfortunately it was very windy and there were very few birds to be seen, with a soaring Black Stork being the highlight. After a sumptuous dinner we tried to lure in some nightbirds, but due to the wind there was nothing calling except for a very distant African Scops Owl.



These two Rüppell's Korhaans gave excellent photo opportunities.

A long journey awaited us, so we left the lodge early in the morning and headed north towards the Kunene River on the Angolan border. It was a long, hot drive, much of it on dirt roads, but not without interest. Raptors were much in evidence, and included Black-chested and Brown Snake Eagles, our first Bateleur, Augur Buzzard, Tawny Eagle, African Hawk-Eagle, Shikra and a stunning adult Martial Eagle. In a wooded valley near Opuwo, we saw Rüppell's Parrot, a very obliging Pearl-spotted Owlet, found a party of White-crested Helmetshrikes and our first Meves's Starlings. A displaying Red-crested Korhaan was watched at length, and we also connected with Damara Red-billed Hornbill. It rained pretty hard during the last stretch of the journey, and by 16:30 we had arrived at our lovely little lodge on the banks of the Kunene River. It was still raining by then so we ended the day relaxing on the decking over the river, looking across to Angola and watching an assortment of birds flying back and forth, including a huge Goliath Heron.

We awoke to clear skies, and we began the next day with an early morning session on the veranda followed by a walk round the garden. A Verreaux's Eagle Owl was calling across the river, and we eventually located this big owl with striking pink eyelids sitting on a tree. In the hotel grounds we quickly found Red-necked Spurfowl of the local subspecies, Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush, vocal Woodland Kingfishers, a White-browed Coucal and a pair of Yellow-bellied Greenbuls. A short walk along the river after breakfast added Little Sparrowhawk and a flock of Violet Wood Hoopoes, and then in mid-morning, Peter took us off in his pickup truck to look for Cinderella Waxbills. This is the only area in Namibia where this waxbill –pretty much an Angolan specialty- occurs, so we were of course very keen on seeing it. The waxbills usually come to drink to a couple of certain, well-known, spots, and are thus quite reliably seen, but due to the rain during the previous two days there was water everywhere, all birds were disperse, and the chances of seeing these scarce waxbills were going to be slim. However, we gave it a good try. We went to a side valley and walked up the canyon, even climbing a waterfall (thanks everybody for your tenacity!), to reach the favoured area. It was very hot and there were few birds around, but nevertheless we spent a good two hours looking for the waxbills, sadly, to no avail. Once it was clear the birds weren't in the area, we reluctantly walked down the

valley to our vehicles – and also to some hoped-for cold drinks! We then returned to the lodge for lunch and a siesta – a rare treat on this tour. The river level was reasonably high, and that evening we were able to take a ‘sundowner cruise’ up river to the first major stretch of rapids. The highlights of this gentle evening’s birding was a well camouflaged White-backed Night Heron at its day roost seen by some of us, but we also came across a close African Fish Eagle, a dozen Water Thick-knees, our first Mourning Collared Dove and several African Pied Wagtails. On the way back, we landed on a beach on the Angolan side of the river and rounded off a great day with drinks from Peter’s ice chest.



Violet Wood Hoopoe, left, and Red-necked Spurfowl of the nominate subspecies, afer, showed well at Kunene River Lodge.

We left Kunene early in the morning as it was still a long drive to Etosha. We had done well –bird wise- here, but obviously the waxbill miss hurt. As we left the lodge we all thought we had missed the bird –except Steve, that is, who still had an ace under its sleeve. An hour or so after, Steve stopped at a wooded creek and within minutes we found a pair of Cinderella Waxbills! YES, what a relief! We had excellent views of them, and on the walk back, we found yet another group of at least 8 birds, while a pair of White-bellied Sunbirds also gave great views. Very satisfied with our success, we kept going. The journey was uneventful until we reached Onesi Dam, where we added a few species, including Glossy Ibis, Allen’s Gallinule, African Snipe, Booted Eagle and Black-faced Quailfinch to our list. We arrived at the Galton Gate entrance to Etosha National Park in late afternoon. The 45-km drive from the entrance gate to Dolomite Camp took us far longer than anticipated, as we had to keep stopping for big game, especially around one of the waterholes visited. Our first African Elephants were admired, both species of zebra (Mountain and Burchell’s) were seen, as well as Giraffe, Steenbok, Gemsbok and Kudu. Birds were in evidence too, and included three Lanner Falcons and three huge Kori Bustards. It was almost sunset by the time we arrived at our lodge and certainly time to relax with a cold beer at the end of a long day.



It took some effort, and time, to find the scarce Cinderella Waxbill, but we eventually saw it, on our last attempt! African Cuckoo, right.

Dolomite Camp is situated on the top of rocky outcrop – ideal habitat for one of Namibia’s specialties, Hartlaub’s Francolin. We awoke the next morning and on the walk to the dining room some of us had great views of a family of francolins, right by the path. However, the birds weren’t vocal and despite our best efforts, we couldn’t relocate them after breakfast. On the other hand, we heard the distant calls of an Orange River Francolin, - usually a pretty difficult species to see-, and luckily after some playback the bird ran straight towards us, walking around in the parking lot and giving the best views we could have hoped for. The only mammal of note in the area was a distant Black Rhino way out on the plains below. We decided to leave Dolomite straight after breakfast and check out a couple of waterholes on the plains. This was a good decision, as at the second waterhole, we had great views of at least 30 Burchell’s Sandgrouse and 40 Namaqua Sandgrouse coming in to drink. We spent the rest of the morning driving towards Okaukuejo, visiting a couple of waterholes and stopping many times to enjoy the abundant wildlife. Birds of note included a pair of Secretarybirds, a Lappet-faced Vulture, a Black-chested Snake Eagle, a Bateleur, an Augur Buzzard, two Tawny Eagles, a pair of Red-necked Falcons, several Kori Bustards, half a dozen Northern Black Korhaans, 3 Burchell’s Coursers, a pair of Temminck’s Coursers, a few Purple Rollers, our first of many wintering Lesser Grey Shrikes and European Bee-eaters, several Spike-heeled Larks and great views of 10 Pink-billed Larks. There was a lot of big game, mostly Burchell’s Zebra, Blue Wildebeest and Springbok, but with smaller numbers of Warthog, Giraffe, Red Hartebeest, Steenbok, Impala, Gemsbok and Kudu. We also came across about a dozen African Elephants as we were approaching Okaukuejo, which walked past right next to our cars, much to the delight of Lew. After a siesta during the heat of the day we spent several hours visiting some nearby waterholes. A displaying male Northern Black Korhaan posed for photos in the excellent afternoon light, as did some confiding Double-banded Coursers. However, the real highlight came in form of an African Wild Cat spotted by Steve that gave great views right near the track. We rounded off the day visiting the waterhole at Okaukuejo, just in front of our cabins, after dinner and enjoyed excellent looks at a family of African Elephants coming in to drink, several very close Black Rhinos and our first Lion, while a Rufous-cheeked Nightjar made several passes.



We had walk-away views of a very responsive Orange River Francolin at Dolomite Camp.

We left Okaukuejo soon after breakfast and spent the rest of the day driving slowly back to Namutoni via Halali camp, calling in at several waterholes on the way. The birding and game viewing were excellent, with highlights including four White-backed Vultures, 4 Secretarybirds, a Gabar Goshawk, large numbers of Namaqua Sandgrouse coming in to drink at one of the waterholes, our first Jacobin and African Cuckoos and Red-backed Shrikes, a few European Bee-eaters, some Fawn-coloured Larks and three Red-breasted Swallows. In the afternoon we visited the nearby waterhole, and in the surrounding area located a pair of Crested Francolins, a single Marabou Stork, four African Jacanas, a beautiful European Roller and three Southern Red-billed Hornbills, as well as two Spotted Hyenas and many Damara Dik-Diks. The afternoon light was marvellous, and we took advantage of it while photographing a group of Giraffes and African Elephants that came to the waterhole to drink.

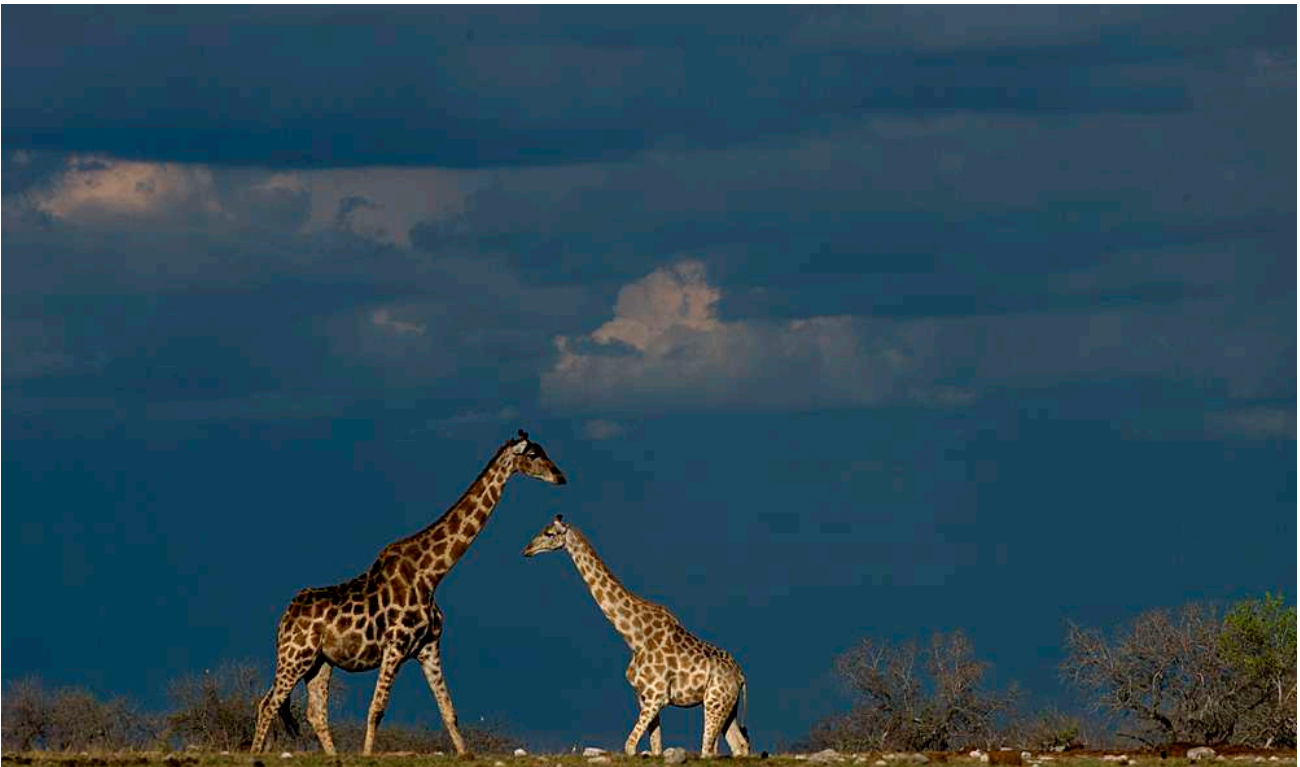


Zebras are always photogenic creatures.

The whole of the next day was devoted to game drives in the park in an open-sided truck. First thing in the morning was a quick visit to see if anything was attending the remains of a young Black Rhino that had died the previous day, after a fight with another male. Only a small part of the body was left, but there were still several Spotted Hyenas feeding on it. It could look like a cruel or sad sight, but this is Africa, and wildlife has to fight for surviving. Afterwards we headed north to Andoni Plain, visiting several waterholes on the way, while in the afternoon we did the loop around Fischer's Pan, calling in at the Twee Palms waterhole. Once again, the birding and game viewing were excellent. Birding highlights included three Secretarybirds, an adult Martial Eagle, a flock of 9 superb Blue Cranes, one Common Buttonquail to the delight of Carol and Neil, 6 Temminck's Coursers, a male Double-banded Sandgrouse, an adult Great Spotted Cuckoo, a Bearded Woodpecker, a flock of Cape Penduline Tits, eight displaying Eastern Clapper Larks, a group of Burnt-necked Eremomelas, two flocks of Southern Pied Babblers, plenty of Long-tailed Paradise Whydahs and four Black-faced Quailfinches, while notable mammals included another Black Rhinoceros and several Damara Dik-Diks. Special mention goes to the female Cheetah with her 2 small cubs that gave incredible views, very close to the vehicle, as they rested under a small tree, then went to a small waterhole to drink, and ended up walking right in front of our vehicles. Absolutely brilliant stuff!



Female Cheetah with one of her 2 small cubs. One of the highlights of the trip!



Giraffes in the afternoon light.

It was a long drive the next day to Rundu on the Okavango. A pair of Bradfield's Hornbills obligingly flew across the road as we were approaching Grootfontein and responded well to playback, and in the same area we saw our first Wahlberg's Eagle. Well before noon, we had arrived at Roy's Camp, in the bush northeast of Grootfontein. The resident group of Black-faced Babblers soon appeared to greet us, while other additions

to our list included a male Eurasian Golden Oriole, a group of Southern Black Tits and a very showy Yellow-breasted Apalis. After a quick lunch, we hit the road again, and by mid afternoon we had reached the miombo-like woodland characteristic of Namibia's northeastern border regions, and stopped for our first foray into this interesting habitat. The weather was awful, with some heavy showers on the way, and there were very few birds in evidence, but we managed to see Eurasian Hobby, an adult male Shikra, some African Yellow White-eyes, a pair of Violet-backed Starlings found by Carol, two Black Cuckooshrikes, a single Kurrichane Thrush, Southern Black Flycatcher, a pair of Yellow-throated Petronias and three Amethyst Sunbirds. We arrived at our lodge on the banks of the Okavango River still with plenty of time to explore the surrounding habitat, and before reaching our accommodation we enjoyed excellent views of several stunning Southern Carmine and Blue-ckeeded Bee-eaters. After checking in, we visited a nearby wetland created by the recent rains, where we saw the scarce White-backed Duck, five delightful African Pygmy Geese, two Knob-billed Ducks, a flock of African Openbills, a single Rufous-bellied Heron, no less than 5 showy Lesser Jacanas, a singing Black Cuckoo found by Chris, and a pair of Coppery-tailed Coucals. In the garden we found an excellent selection of birds including our first Red-eyed Doves, a Senegal Coucal, a Levillant's Cuckoo, several Wire-tailed Swallows and a party of Hartlaub's Babblers. Shortly after dusk, we had a fly by Western Barn Owl and two White-backed Night Herons from the veranda of the lodge overlooking the river.



A pair of elegant Blue Cranes at Andoni Plain.

Early the next morning, we drove out to Rundu sewage works, one of the birding hotspots in the northeast. The birding here proved to be excellent, and there were plenty of birds about. Amongst the highlights, a Slaty Egret, one of the main targets of the tour, spotted by Liam, was a welcome find, while a pair of Baillon's Crakes performed superbly in the open. Other notable species included two Fulvous Whistling Ducks, a male Southern Pochard, a brief Yellow-billed Duck, some Hottentot Teals, one Yellow-billed Stork, a Western Osprey, an African Marsh Harrier, a single Marsh Sandpiper, an African Rail, three African Wattled Lapwings, three Greater Painted Snipes, two African Snipes, 15 Red-knobbed Coots, three Brown-throated Martins, a Sedge Warbler, two Little Rush Warblers, three Fan-tailed Widowbirds and a large colony of Village Weavers. Afterwards, we set off for Divundu at the western end of the Caprivi Strip. Much of the forest between Rundu and Divundu has been cleared within the last 15 years, but there are still a few patches remaining and we stopped at several of these in the hope of finding a few birds. In spite of being the

middle of the day, we did very well, quickly connecting with our two main targets: a responsive male Souza's Shrike and a showy Rufous-bellied Tit. Also in the area we had a Dark Chanting Goshawk, a trio of calling Striped Kingfishers, an Icterine Warbler, a group of Green-capped Eremomelas, a Pale Flycatcher and three Yellow-fronted Canaries. Soon after leaving Divundu, we stopped at a stretch of rapids along the Okavango where we found some Rock Pratincoles and nearby, our first Magpie Shrikes. It was then only a short drive to Ndhovu Lodge, a beautiful 'tented' camp overlooking the river. The extensive grounds of the lodge held plenty of birds including 5 Meyer's Parrots, our first African Green Pigeons, a nice African Barred Owlet calling from a tree across the river, a Black-collared Barbet, an African Golden Oriole, small parties of Arrow-marked and Hartlaub's Babbler, a Red-billed Oxpecker and several White-browed Robin Chats. Later, as we relaxed on the decking, we watched a succession of birds flying up, down or across the river. These included several flocks of White-faced Whistling Ducks, 300 Spur-winged Geese, 50 Knob-billed Ducks, some Yellow-billed Storks, three African Sacred Ibises, six African Spoonbills, four White-backed Night Herons, two Goliath Herons, a Slaty Egret, ten African Darters, two Rock Pratincoles, six African Skimmers, a Coppery-tailed Coucal and a pair of Woodland Kingfishers. Across the river in the Caprivi Game Reserve, six Kudus, a pair of Bushbuck, a single Reedbuck and 5 Waterbucks were grazing on the riverbank.



Baillon's Crakes are usually pretty shy birds, but this one stayed out in the open for ages.

We were out on the veranda again early the next morning to watch the sunrise over the river. Several flocks of White-faced Whistling Ducks and Spur-winged Geese passed by, and we also added Terrestrial Brownbul to our list. We left the lodge after breakfast and continued on to the Mahango Game Reserve on the Botswana border. In the game reserve, the birding was as good as ever, with the highlights including two Swainson's Spurfowls, our third Slaty Egret of the trip (again found by Liam!), a single White-headed Vulture, a Steppe Eagle, our only Lesser Kestrel of the trip, six superb Wattled Cranes, six Collared Pratincoles, a very cooperative African Barred Owlet, two Grey-headed Kingfishers, a group of Green Wood Hoopoes, three Bennett's Woodpeckers, including one mobbing a Pearl-spotted Owlet, two Purple-banded Sunbirds. There were also lots of large mammals, including three Tsessebe, 2 Roan, 10 Sable, 20 African Buffalo, 5 Bushbuck, 10 Reedbuck and 10 Red Lechwe. Crossing the border into Botswana was quick and easy,

seeing a Klass's Cuckoo as we were filling in our forms, and then it was only a short drive to Shakawe River Lodge in the Okavango Panhandle. We arrived at the lodge in the early afternoon and had plenty of time to settle in before exploring the extensive grounds. The birding was very good and our tally in this first evening included a roosting African Wood Owl, 80 African Green Pigeons attending a fig tree, a male Narina Trogon, several Broad-billed Rollers, good numbers of White-fronted Bee-eaters, two Crested Barbets, two Collared Sunbirds and plenty of Southern Brown-throated, Thick-billed and Village Weavers. Lots of raptors were up in the sky, feeding on termites, and amongst the masses of Yellow-billed Kites we discovered some Lesser-spotted Eagles, while two Abdim's Storks flew overhead.

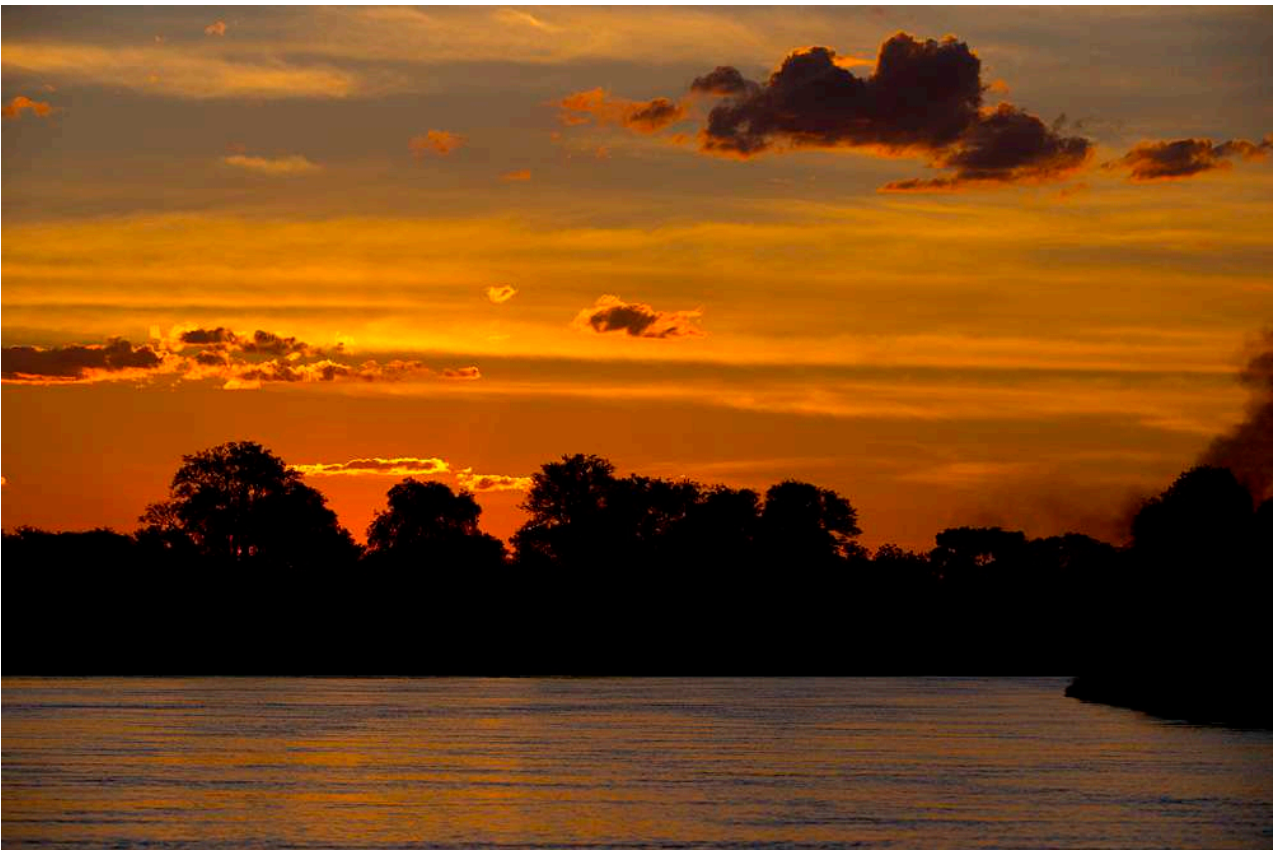


Immature White-backed Night Heron at Shakawe.

Our full day at Shakawe began with a pre-breakfast walk in the woodland, and then we spent much of the day on the river, with a trip up the main channel of the Okavango in the morning and a trip downstream in the evening. The main objective of the morning's excursion was to find a Pel's Fishing Owl, but with no staked-out birds, it wasn't going to be an easy task. We disembarked in a promising wooded area by the bank of the river, and started our search. After some time walking around, without any sign of our quarry, and with the pressure building up, we suddenly flushed a bird from a tall tree. Luckily, in no time we found where it had landed. We then set our scopes and spent half an hour admiring this stunning, huge, marmalade-coloured owl. WOW, what a bird! Delighted with our success with the owl, we moved on up river, finding two confiding White-backed Night Herons that gave great views. The owl was undoubtedly the highlight of the day, but we saw lots of other good things along the river, including two Little Bitterns, 15 Marabou Storks, at least 20 African Darters, a pair of African Cuckoo-Hawks, at least 10 African Fish Eagles, a Wahlberg's Eagle, some Long-toed Lapwings, a flock of 10 Whiskered Terns, several Blue-cheeked and Southern Carmine Bee-eaters, a couple of Chirping Cisticolas, four Swamp Boubous and a pair of Tawny-flanked Prinias. During the afternoon boat trip we had good views of a colony of African Skimmers, with some delightful young birds (its massive bills seemed a bit too heavy to lift them up!), while Greater Swamp Warbler performed superbly. We went ashore on a small island where Luapula Cisticolas –we had seen one earlier on, but only briefly- can be found, but this time they weren't interested in our tape. By late afternoon, we made our way back upstream to the lodge and were treated to clouds of hirundines – literally tens of thousands of Barn Swallows, with other species mixed in, including Banded Martins and Lesser Striped Swallows. Watching a spectacular sunset over the river, from our boat, was surely a great way to finish off a very successful day.



Pel's Fishing Owl, the star bird of the Okavango.



Before breakfast the next morning, we had one last walk in the lodge grounds to look for the resident Brown Firefinches, but like the previous day, to no avail. Thanks to the tip of the lodge owner, we made a quick stop on the way out, and were rewarded with good, albeit brief, views of an impressive Southern Ground Hornbill. An African Woolly-necked Stork was also seen in flight, and several Lesser Spotted Eagles gave good views. The journey back to the Namibian border was uneventful, and by mid morning we were back in the Mahango Game Reserve. It was fairly quiet here, and we soon set off on the long drive back to Rundu, seeing our only African Harrier-Hawk of the trip perched in a tree by the river. There was little moving at our lunch stop in the teak woodland other than a Southern Black Flycatcher, and although we tried for Sharp-tailed Starling at spots where we had seen them in the past, they were not on show. The rest of the journey to Rundu was uneventful, and we arrived to our lodge by early afternoon. After some time to relax, we headed to the Rundu Sewage Works for another look. This time the place was fairly quiet, and drier than on our last visit, but nevertheless we enjoyed some good birds in the afternoon light. The Reed Cormorant roost, totalling over 500 birds, was quite impressive, and a Black Heron was new for our pretty impressive bird list. We waited until dusk, hoping for a Marsh Owl to appear, but they appeared to be absent from the area.



Watching wildlife in Namibia can be pretty easy...

Well pleased with this brief transit stop in Rundu, we set off on the long drive to the Erongo Mountains near Omaruru. We made a couple of stops, looking for Racquet-tailed Roller, but couldn't find any. The rest of the drive to Omaruru went very smoothly, until, just before reaching the lodge, we had a flat tyre. Luckily it didn't take long to get it replaced, and by late afternoon we had arrived at the very pleasant Erongo Wilderness Lodge, set amidst spectacular rocky outcrops in the Erongo Mountains. After settling in, we reassembled on the veranda overlooking the waterhole, where a variety of birds were coming to drink. While having dinner, we heard a distant Freckled Nightjar calling, and soon one bird appeared in the floodlights.

We were up early the next morning to watch a procession of birds coming in to the 'bird table' just outside the restaurant, including 60 Rosy-faced Lovebirds, half a dozen Great Sparrows and two Cape Buntings. There was still time after breakfast to enjoy some of the other birds around the lodge, which included Monteiro's Hornbill, Rockrunner, Pale-winged Starling, Short-toed Rock Thrush and Dusky Sunbird. This is usually a good place for Hartlaub's Francolin, however they were with young by the time of our visit, and sadly none responded to the tape. By 09:00 it was time to leave. The journey back to Windhoek was uneventful, and after a final picnic lunch, where we exchanged farewells with several of our colleagues, we shuffled off to the airport, where some of us saw a couple of South African Cliff Swallows mixed in with other

hirundines and swifts, for the long flight home, at the end of another great tour to Namibia and the Okavango. I wish to say a big thank you to Steve, without his efforts and knowledge this tour wouldn't have been such a success.

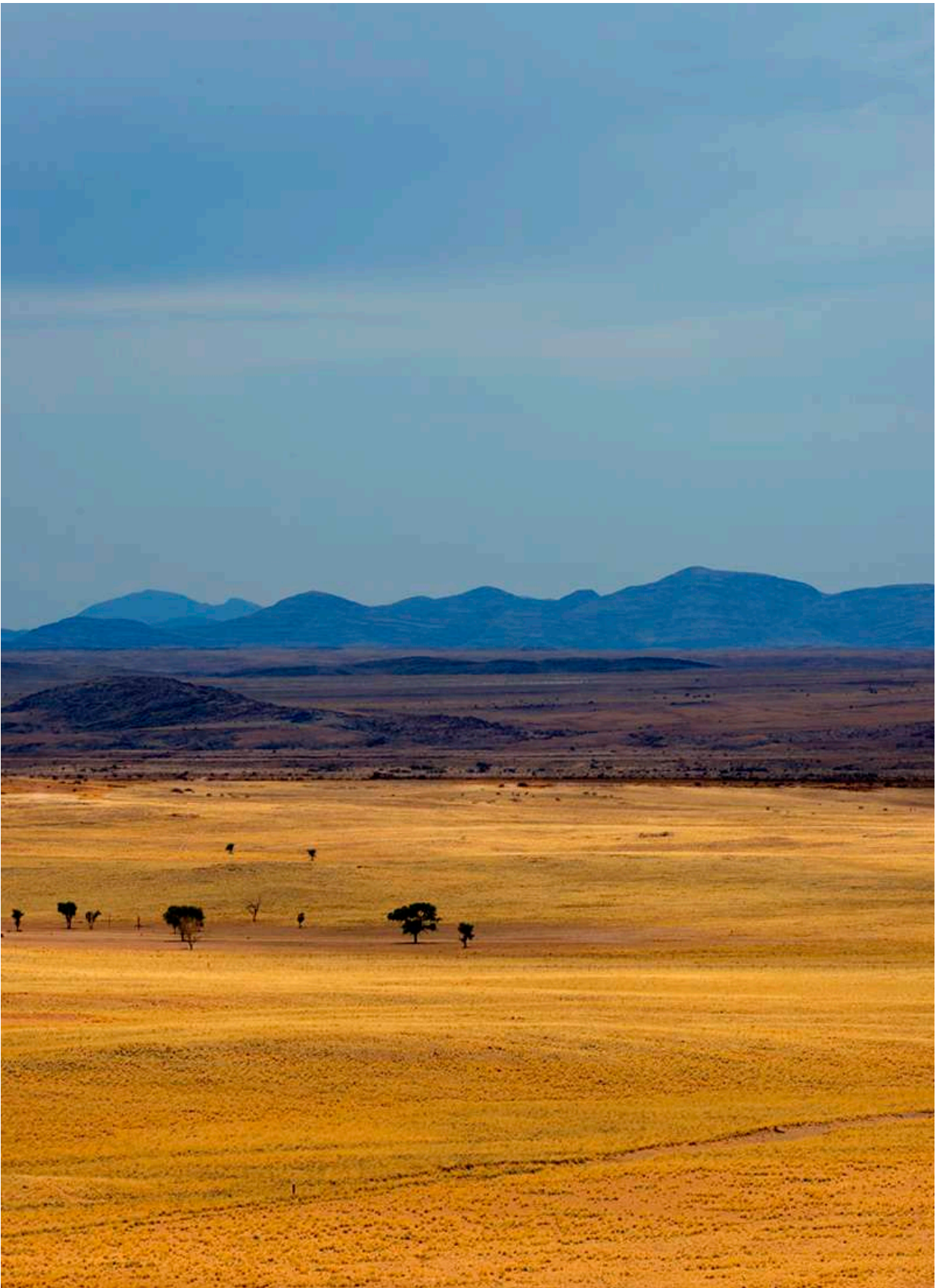
Double-banded Sandgrouse, above, and Namaqua Sandgrouse, below.





Southern Carmine Bee-eater and African Skimmer.





SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

E = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

Common Ostrich *Struthio camelus* Many good sightings in the Namib desert and in Etosha.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Regular encounters.

Coqui Francolin *Peliperdix coqui* (H) Heard only.

Orange River Francolin ◊ *Scleroptila levillantooides* Great views at Dolomite Camp.

Crested Francolin *Dendroperdix sephaena* Great views on several occasions in Etosha.

Hartlaub's Spurfowl (H Francolin) ◊ *Pternistis hartlaubi* Good views for some of us of a family at Dolomite Camp.

Red-billed Spurfowl (Francolin) ◊ *Pternistis adspersus* Great views on many occasions; the commonest francolin.

Red-necked Spurfowl (R-n Francolin) *Pternistis afer* Good views of about 5 along the Kunene River. See Note.

Swainson's Spurfowl (S Francolin) ◊ *Pternistis swainsonii* Close views of two in the Mahango.

White-faced Whistling Duck (W-f Duck) *Dendrocygna viduata* Common in the northeast.

Fulvous Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* Two seen at Rundu Sewage Works.

White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus* A first for this tour! Three seen well at Hakusembe.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* Good numbers at Ndhovu Lodge and in the Mahango.

Knob-billed Duck (Comb D) *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Good numbers at Ndhovu Lodge and in the Mahango.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Commonly encountered at wetlands throughout the tour.

South African Shelduck ◊ *Tadorna cana* Twenty at Gammans sewage works, and eight birds later in the tour.

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus* Good views of 5 at Hakusembe.

Cape Teal *Anas capensis* Large numbers in Walvis Bay and small numbers at several other wetlands.

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata* One seen at Rundu Sewage Works - a scarce bird in Namibia.

Cape Shoveler ◊ *Anas smithii* Good views of a single bird in Walvis Bay.

Red-billed Teal (R-b Duck) *Anas erythrorhyncha* Common at wetlands throughout the tour.

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota* At least 15 at Rundu sewage works.

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma* Good views of a male at Rundu sewage works.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus* At least 20 passing south off the ocean beach at Walvis Bay.

Little Grebe (Dabchick) *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Small numbers at freshwater wetlands throughout the tour.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* At least 1000, mostly distant, on the salt pans at Walvis Bay. See Note.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* Many thousands in Walvis Bay.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (NT) Many thousands in Walvis Bay.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* A bird in flight at Ndhovu Lodge and a 10 in the Mahango.

African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus* Small numbers in the northeast.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* One soaring at Huab Lodge.

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii* Two in flight over Shakawe.

African Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia [episcopus] microscelis* One in flight at Shakawe.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer* Small numbers in Etosha, in the Mahango and 50 at Shakawe.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Seen at Ndhovu and the Mahango.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Three at Onesi Dam.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* At least 6 over the river at Ndhovu and 3 in the Mahango.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* Good views of 2 along the river at Shakawe. See Note.

White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus* Seen well at the Kunene River, Ndhovu and Shakawe.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Fairly common in the northeast.

Striated Heron (Green-backed H) *Butorides striata* Recorded in the northeast.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* Fairly common in the northeast.

Rufous-bellied Heron *Ardeola rufiventris* Singles at Rundu sewage works, Hakusembe and Ndhovu

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Widespread, and fairly common in the north.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Small numbers at wetlands throughout.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* Two at Onesi Dam and odd ones elsewhere.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* Great views of one or two birds on several occasions at wetlands in the north.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* A total of 7 birds recorded.

Great Egret (Great White E) *Ardea alba* Fairly common at wetlands in the northeast.

Yellow-billed Egret *Egretta [intermedia] brachyrhyncha* Odd ones at Rundu, Ndhovu and the Mahango.

Black Heron (B Egret) *Egretta ardesiaca* One at Rundu S W.

Slaty Egret *Egretta vinaceigula* (VU) Great views of one in Rundu SW, 1 in flight at Ndhovu and 1 in the Mahango.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Common in the Walvis Bay area and fairly common along rivers in the north.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* One at Gammans and a scattering in the northeast.

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* At least 50 in the Walvis Bay area.

Cape Gannet *Morus capensis* (VU) Only 5 passing by off the ocean beach at Walvis Bay.

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus* A few at Gammans and common along rivers in the north.

Crowned Cormorant *Microcarbo coronatus* (NT) Good scope views of one in the coast north of Walvis Bay.

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Fairly common in Walvis Bay.

Cape Cormorant *Phalacrocorax capensis* (NT) Good numbers in the Walvis Bay area.

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* A couple in the Windhoek area and fairly common along rivers in the north.

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius* (VU) A total of 15 birds seen, mostly in Etosha National Park. A good show!

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* 11 birds recorded.

African Cuckoo-Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides* Superb views of a pair at Shakawe.



Juvenile Lesser Spotted Eagle.

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* A rarity in Namibia! Great views of an adult male at Gammans.

Black-winged Kite (Black-shouldered K) *Elanus caeruleus* Nine birds recorded.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius* Fairly common in the northeast, with thousands feeding on termites at Shakawe.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* Many great sightings in the north.

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* (EN) About 20 at Etosha and at least 30 in the Mahango.

White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis* (VU) Great views of one in the Mahango.

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos* (VU) Occasional sightings throughout the tour, totalling about 10 birds.

Black-chested Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis* Half a dozen sightings of single birds.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus* 5 birds seen .

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* (NT) Many great sightings, with at least 23 birds recorded.

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* Brief views of one in the Mahango and better views of one at Shakawe.

African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene) *Polyboroides typus* One in the Okavango.

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates* Only one bird seen near Rundu.

Pale Chanting Goshawk (Southern P C G) *Melierax canorus* Regular sightings throughout the dry country.

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* Several good sightings.

Shikra (Little Banded Goshawk) *Accipiter badius* Three single birds seen.

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus* Great scope views of one at the Kunene River.

Steppe (Common) Buzzard *Buteo (buteo) vulpinus* A few birds seen. See Note.

Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur* A total of three birds recorded.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* Great views of several birds at Shakawe.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* Good views of up to a dozen at Etosha and several more on the long drives.

Verreaux's Eagle (Black E) *Aquila verreauxii* Great views of four birds over the hills near Spreetshoogte Pass.

African Hawk-Eagle *Aquila spilogaster* A total of four pairs recorded at widely scattered localities.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraetus wahlbergi* Only 4 birds seen.

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* Three birds seen.

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* (NT) Good views of 3 widely scattered individuals, including one at Shakawe.

Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori* Superb views of at least 20 at Etosha, but none elsewhere.



Kori Bustard, left, and Rüppell's Korhaan, right.

Ludwig's Bustard ◊ *Neotis ludwigii* (EN) Good show this year, with 12 seen on four dates

Rüppell's Korhaan ◊ *Eupodotis rueppellii* Superb views of 9 on the drive to Walvis Bay.

Red-crested Korhaan *Lophotis ruficrista* Great views of 5 birds.

Northern Black Korhaan ◊ *Afrotis afroides* Three on the drive to Namibgrens and at least 25 at Etosha.

African Rail *Rallus caerulescens* One seen well at Rundu S W.

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra* Fairly common along the Kunene and Okavango rivers.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* Two gave great views out in the open at Rundu S W.

African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis* 15 at Gammans and 5 at Rundu.

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni* One seen briefly at Onesi Dam.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Recorded on several occasions at freshwater wetlands.

Red-knobbed Coot (Crested C) *Fulica cristata* Common at Gammans and also seen at Onesi Dam and Rundu.

Blue Crane ◊ *Grus paradisea* (VU) Superb views of up to 9 at Andoni waterhole at Etosha. See Note.

Wattled Crane ◊ *Grus carunculata* (VU) Good scope views of three pairs in the Mahango Game Reserve.

Common Buttonquail (Small B, Little B) *Turnix sylvaticus* Good views of one in flight at Andoni waterhole.

Water Thick-knee (W Dikkop) *Burhinus vermiculatus* Seen well on several occasions along rivers in the northeast.

Spotted Thick-knee (S Dikkop) *Burhinus capensis* Good views of 4 pairs.

African Oystercatcher ◊ (A Black O) *Haematopus moquini* (NT) Seen at Walvis Bay.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Common at Walvis Bay, at Onesi Dam and in the northeast.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* Common at Walvis Bay.

Long-toed Lapwing *Vanellus crassirostris* 10 in the Mahango. See Note.

Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus* Common at wetlands throughout the tour.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus* Pairs and small parties on several occasions throughout the tour.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus* Good views in the Okavango area.

Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola* At least 100 at Walvis Bay.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* About 10 at Walvis Bay.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* Widespread.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* Small numbers at wetlands throughout the tour.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus* Common in the Walvis Bay area.

Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus* (NT) Great views of about 300 at Walvis Bay. See Note.

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* Three seen well at Rundu S W.

Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis* Good views of 5 at Hakusembe.



A nice Double-banded Courser.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* One at Gammans and fairly common along the rivers in the north.

African Snipe (Ethiopian S) *Gallinago nigripennis* Excellent views at Rundu S W.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* At least 200 in Walvis Bay.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* 15 in Walvis Bay.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Two at Walvis Bay and one at Rundu.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Good numbers at Walvis Bay and at wetlands in the north.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Small numbers at wetlands almost throughout the tour.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* Good views of a bird on the mudflats at Walvis Bay. See Note.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Small numbers at wetlands throughout the tour.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Common at Walvis Bay.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* Only one at Walvis Bay.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* Several hundred in Walvis Bay.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Common in Walvis Bay and small numbers at many other wetlands.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* The commonest small wader in Walvis Bay.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* Small numbers recorded at wetlands throughout the tour.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* A loose party of 21 on the salt pans at Walvis Bay. See Note.

Burchell's Courser \diamond *Cursorius rufus* Seen en route from Walvis Bay to Huab, and also at Etosha.

Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii* Great views at Etosha.

Double-banded Courser (Two-banded C) *Rhinoptilus africanus* Great views at Etosha.

Collared Pratincole (Red-winged P) *Glareola pratincola* Small numbers in the Mahango.

Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* Great scope views on three occasions in the north east.

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris* (NT) 10 at Ndhovu Lodge and 14 along the river at Shakawe.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* Good views of an adult in Walvis Bay.

Hartlaub's Gull \diamond *Chroicocephalus hartlaubii* Very common in the Walvis Bay area.

Cape Gull \diamond *Larus vetula* Common in the Walvis Bay area.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* About 25 in Walvis Bay.

Greater Crested Tern (Swift T) *Thalasseus bergii* A few in Walvis Bay.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* Common in Walvis Bay.

Damara Tern \diamond *Sternula balaenarum* (NT) Distant views at Walvis Bay and much better views up the coast .

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Very common in the Walvis Bay area. See Note.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* A flock of 10, mostly in breeding plumage, along the river at Shakawe.

Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) *Stercorarius parasiticus* Two chasing terns off the beach at Walvis Bay.

Namaqua Sandgrouse \diamond *Pterocles namaqua* First seen in the desert near Uis and then several times at Etosha.

Double-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles bicinctus* Seen well in Etosha.

Burchell's Sandgrouse \diamond *Pterocles burchelli* 15 birds seen well at one of the waterholes in Etosha National Park.



Burchell's Sandgrouse, left, and Spotted Thick-knee, right.

Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia* Common in all the towns.

Speckled Pigeon (Rock P) *Columba guinea* A few seen.

Mourning Collared Dove (African Mourning D) *Streptopelia decipiens* A few in the northeast.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Common and very vociferous in the northeast.

Ring-necked (Cape Turtle D) *Streptopelia capicola* Recorded commonly throughout the tour.

Laughing Dove (Palm D) *Spilopelia senegalensis* Recorded commonly throughout the tour.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove (Green-spotted D) *Turtur chalcospilos* Fairly common in the northeast.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Recorded in small numbers throughout the tour.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus* Good numbers around the lodge and along the river at Shakawe.

Rosy-faced Lovebird ◊ *Agapornis roseicollis* A few in the west and at the Kunene River, and lots at Erongo.

Meyer's Parrot (Brown P) *Poicephalus meyeri* A few at Ndhovu and Shakawe.

Rüppell's Parrot ◊ *Poicephalus rueppellii* Small numbers in the western part of Etosha and along the Kunene River.

Grey Go-away-bird (G Lourie) *Corythaixoides concolor* Commonly encountered wherever there were trees.

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis* Seen well on several occasions around lodges in the northeast.

Coppery-tailed Coucal ◊ *Centropus cupreicaudus* Seen well on several occasions on floodplains in the northeast.

White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus* Great views at Kunene River Lodge and Ndhovu Lodge.

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* Excellent views of one in Etosha and another at Rundu S W.

Levaillant's Cuckoo (Striped C) *Clamator levaillantii* Good views of 4 birds during the tour.

Jacobin Cuckoo (Black-and-white C) *Clamator jacobinus* At least 7 birds recorded.

Diederik Cuckoo (Didric C) *Chrysococcyx caprius* One seen well at Rundu S W.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* One seen well in the Namibia – Botswana border.

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamorus* Excellent views on several occasions at Hakusembe.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* (H) Heard calling near Rundu.

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis* Seen very well in Etosha.

Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba* Good views of one at Hakusembe.

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis* (H) Heard a couple of times, but refused to come to the tape.

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl (Giant E-O) *Bubo lacteus* Great views of one at Kunene.

Pel's Fishing Owl ◊ *Scotopelia peli* Fantastic views of one in a patch of woodland by the river at Shakawe.

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* Superb views of one at Shakawe Lodge.

Pearl-spotted Owlet (P-s Owl) *Glaucidium perlatum* Seen well on many occasions throughout the tour.

African Barred Owlet (African B Owl) *Glaucidium capense* Seen well at Kunene and in the Mahango.

Rufous-cheeked Nightjar *Caprimulgus rufigena* Seen at Etosha.

Freckled Nightjar *Caprimulgus tristigma* One hawking over the waterhole at Erongo Wilderness Lodge.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* About 20 individuals, mostly in the west.

Common Swift *Apus apus* Hundreds throughout the tour.



White-fronted Bee-eater.

Bradfield's Swift *Apus bradfieldi* Good views on the first couple of days of the tour.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* Common around Windhoek and scattered observations elsewhere.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* Small numbers on several occasions in central Namibia.

White-backed Mousebird *Colius colius* Seen well on several occasions near Windhoek and in the arid west.

Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* Seen well on several occasions in the north and east.

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina* Great views of three males at Shakawe.

Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R) *Coracias naevius* Scattered sightings.

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* Two near Windhoek and about 20 at Etosha and in the northeast.

European Roller *Coracias garrulus* One in Etosha.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* First seen in the Mahango, and then a few at Shakawe.

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* Two in the Mahango.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* Three seen well in the woodland near Rundu.

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* Good views of a pair at Ndhovu and one at Shakawe.

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* Small numbers along the rivers in the north.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* Excellent views at the Kunene River, Hakusembe, Ndhovu and Shakawe.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Fairly common at wetlands in the north, from the Kunene River to Shakawe.

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus* Fairly common and widespread in the dry bush.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus* Fairly common along the rivers in the north.

White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides* Seen well at Shakawe.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* Seen well in the north east.

Olive Bee-eater (Madagascar B-e) *Merops superciliosus* Great views at Huab.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* Fairly common at Etosha.

Southern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicoides* Delightfully common in the Mahango and at Shakawe.

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana* Scattered observations almost throughout the tour.

Green Wood Hoopoe (Red-billed W H) *Phoeniculus purpureus* Eight in the Mahango.

Violet Wood Hoopoe *(Southern V W H) Phoeniculus damarensis* Great views of a group by the Kunene R.

Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* A total of 5 individuals seen.

Bradfield's Hornbill *Tockus bradfieldi* Good views of 2 pairs near Grootfontein.

African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus* Regular encounters throughout the tour – the most widespread hornbill.

Monteiro's Hornbill *Tockus monteiri* First seen at Avis Dam, recorded at a few other locations.



Monteiro's Hornbill, left, and Short-toed Rock Thrush, right.

Damara Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus damarensis* Seen near Kunene River and at Etosha.

Southern Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus rufirostris* Recorded in eastern Etosha and the Mahango. See Note.

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus leucomelas* Fairly common in the dry bush, especially at Etosha.

Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri* One seen well near Shakawe.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird (Y-f Tinker Barbet) *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* A couple at Shakawe.

Acacia Pied Barbet (Pied B) *Tricholaema leucomelas* Several good sightings in the dry bush and by the Kunene.

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus* Seen commonly in the northeast.

Crested Barbet (Levaillant's B) *Trachyphonus vaillantii* Seen well at Shakawe.

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor* (H) Heard only in the Mahango.

Bennett's Woodpecker ◊ *Campethera bennettii* Three seen very well in the Mahango. See Note.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni* Seen at Kunene Lodge and Shakawe.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* Scattered sightings.

Bearded Woodpecker *Dendropicos namaquus* One in Etosha.

Pygmy Falcon *Polihierax semitorquatus* Two on the drive to Walvis Bay.

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* One seen in the Mahango.

Rock Kestrel *Falco rupicolus* Regular sightings in west and central Namibia.

Greater Kestrel (White-eyed K) *Falco rupicoloides* Seen well on several occasions in the desert, notably at Etosha.

Red-necked Falcon ◊ *Falco chicquera* Good views of a pair hunting doves near Dolomite Camp at Etosha.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* Several birds in the northeast.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* Seven birds recorded at Etosha.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* An adult at one of the waterholes in Etosha.



Juvenile Greater Kestrel, left, and African Cuckoo-Hawk, right.

Pirit Batis ◊ *Batis pririt* Seen well on many occasions in the dry bush.

White-tailed Shrike ◊ *Lanioturdus torquatus* Poor show. First seen near Namibgrens and then by the Kunene River.

White-crested Helmetshrike (White H) *Prionops plumatus* Small parties on two occasions in the north.

Orange-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* Seen twice during the tour.

Bokmakierie ◊ *Telophorus zeylonus* One seen well at Spreetshoogte Pass.

Brown-crowned Tchagra (Three-streaked T) *Tchagra australis* Three good sightings in woodland in the northeast.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegala* (H) Heard only near Rundu.

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla* Seen well several times.

Swamp Boubou ◊ *Laniarius bicolor* Fairly common at the Kunene River and along the Okavango.

Crimson-breasted Shrike ◊ *Laniarius atrococcineus* Several great sightings in the dry bush.

Brubru *Nilaus afer* Great views at Roy's camp.

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava* Good views of two in the woodland near Rundu.

Magpie Shrike *Urolestes melanoleucus* Good views of pairs and small parties in the northeast.

Southern White-crowned Shrike ◊ *Eurocephalus anguitemens* Seen well several times.

Souza's Shrike ◊ *Lanius souzae* Great views of a male in the woodland near Rundu.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* A few birds seen.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* Good numbers seen the northeast. See Note.

Southern Fiscal (S F Shrike) *Lanius collaris* Several good sightings in the west and at Etosha.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* One male seen.

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus* Two scattered sightings.

Black-headed Oriole (Eastern B-h O) *Oriolus larvatus* (H) Heard only at Hakusembe.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Common and widespread.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* First encountered at Kunene, then fairly common in the northeast.

Cape Crow (C Rook, Black C) *Corvus capensis* Small numbers on many occasions, except in the northeast.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Widespread but common only in the densely populated regions in the north.

Carp's Tit ◊ (C's Black T) *Parus carpi* Great views of 4 pairs, first seen on the way to Huab.

Southern Black Tit ◊ *Parus niger* Good views of a pair at Roy's camp.

Rufous-bellied Tit ◊ *Parus rufiventris* Excellent views of a single bird in woodland near Rundu.

Ashy Tit ◊ (Ashy Grey T) *Parus cinerascens* Excellent views of a pair at The Vineyard near Windhoek.

Cape Penduline Tit ◊ *Anthoscopus minutus* Brief views of five in Etosha.

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana* Close views of one at Etosha, with another bird later on the trip.

Eastern Clapper Lark ◊ *Mirafra fasciolata* Great views of displaying birds on Andoni Plain at Etosha.



A selection of larks. Clockwise, from top left: Sabota, Stark's, Spike-heeled and Dune Larks.

Fawn-coloured Lark *Calendulauda africanoides* Seen several times.

Sabota Lark ◊ *Calendulauda sabota* Fairly common in the dry bush, especially at Etosha. See Note.

Dune Lark ◊ *Calendulauda erythrochlamys* Great scope views of four in the red dunes north of Solitaire. See Note.

Benguela Long-billed Lark ◊ *Certhilauda benguelensis* Great views of three on the way to Uis. See Note.

Spike-heeled Lark ◊ *Chersomanes albofasciata* Superb views of about 6 on the bare plains at Etosha.

Gray's Lark ◊ *Ammomanopsis grayi* Good views of two on the plains near Walvis Bay.
Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* Very common at Etosha.
Pink-billed Lark ◊ *Spizocorys conirostris* Great views of at least 10 on the bare plains near Okaukuejo at Etosha.
Stark's Lark ◊ *Spizocorys starki* Common in the desert on the way from Walvis Bay to Uis, and also seen at Etosha.
Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark ◊ (**G-b Finchlark**) *Eremopterix verticalis* Large numbers at the waterholes at Etosha.



And yet more namibian larks! Clockwise, from top left: Pink-billed, Benguela Long-billed, Eastern Clapper and Fawn-colored.

African Red-eyed Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus nigricans* Common and conspicuous, except in the northeast.
Dark-capped Bulbul (Black-eyed B) *Pycnonotus tricolor* Common and conspicuous in the northeast.
Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris* Fairly common in gardens and riverine vegetation in the north.
Terrestrial Brownbul (T Bulbul) *Phyllastrephus terrestris* Good views of a single bird at Ndhovu.
Brown-throated Martin (Plain M) *Riparia paludicola* First seen at Rundu, then lots at Shakawe.
Sand Martin (Bank Swallow) *Riparia riparia* A couple over the river at Shakawe.
Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* Small numbers on several occasions at Etosha and in the northeast.
Barn Swallow (European S) *Hirundo rustica* Fairly common, with thousands at Shakawe.
White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albicularis* Three at Avis Dam and two at Gammans.
Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Small numbers along the rivers in the north.
Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata* Seen well on several occasions in the west.
South African Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon spilodera* Seen by some of us at Windhoek airport.
Rock Martin (African R M) *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Common and widespread in the dry country.
Greater Striped Swallow *Cecropis cucullata* Fairly common in the dry country.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* Seen several times, and good views along the river at Shakawe.
Red-breasted Swallow (Rufous-chested S) *Cecropis semirufa* Fairly common at Etosha.
Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis* Seen well a couple of times during the tour.
South African Cliff Swallow ◊ *Petrochelidon spilodera* Seen briefly by some of us at Windhoek airport.
Rockrunner ◊ *Achaetops pycnopygius* Good views of one at the Avis Dam and two at Erongo Wilderness Lodge.
Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens* Several good sightings in the dry bush.
Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Scattered sightings.
Greater Swamp Warbler ◊ *Acrocephalus rufescens* Great views of two in the papyrus at Shakawe.
Lesser Swamp Warbler (Cape Reed W) *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* Good views at Onesi Dam and Rundu.
Sedge Warbler (European S W) *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* One at Rundu sewage works.
African Reed Warbler (A Marsh W) *Acrocephalus baeticatus* Good views at Gammans and Rundu sewage works.
Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* Seen at the Kunene River and near Rundu.
Little Rush Warbler (African Sedge W) *Bradypterus baboecala* Great views at Rundu S W.
Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* Good views on several occasions – much the most widespread cisticola.
Luapula Cisticola ◊ *Cisticola luapula* Brief views of an elusive bird in the marshes at Shakawe.
Chirping Cisticola ◊ *Cisticola pipiens* Great views of about half a dozen at Shakawe.
Neddicky (Piping Cisticola) *Cisticola fulvicapilla* (H) Heard only near Rundu.
Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tailed C) *Cisticola juncidis* Seen several times.
Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus* Seen well on several occasions in the grassland at Etosha.
Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* Seen well at Shakawe.
Black-chested Prinia ◊ *Prinia flavicans* The common prinia of the dry bush, seen well on many occasions.
Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida* Seen well at Roy's camp.



Tractrac Chat, left, and Pale-winged Starling, right.

Rufous-eared Warbler ◊ *Malcorus pectoralis* Great views of two on the way to Namibgrens.
Grey-backed Camaroptera (G-b Bleating Warbler) *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Fairly common in the north.
Barred Wren-Warbler (African Barred W) *Calamonastes fasciolatus* (H) Heard at Etosha.
Cinnamon-breasted Warbler ◊ *Euryptila subcinnamomea* A first for this tour! One seen at Spreetshoogte pass.
Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis* Scattered sightings.
Green-capped Eremomela *Eremomela scotops* Great views in the woodland near Rundu.
Burnt-necked Eremomela *Eremomela usticollis* Three scattered sightings of small groups.
Black-faced Babbler ◊ (B-lored B) *Turdoides melanops* Great views of a group at Roy's Camp.
Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii* Small parties at Ndhovu Lodge and in the Mahango.
Hartlaub's Babbler ◊ *Turdoides hartlaubii* Common and conspicuous in lodge gardens in the northeast.
Southern Pied Babbler ◊ *Turdoides bicolor* Good views at Etosha.
Bare-cheeked Babbler ◊ *Turdoides gymnogenys* First seen at Huab. Great views by the Kunene River. See Note.
Chestnut-vented Warbler (C-v Titbabbler) *Sylvia subcaerulea* Fairly common in the dry bush.
Orange River White-eye ◊ *Zosterops pallidus* Great views of 2 in a garden at Swakopmund.
African Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis* Fairly common in the woodland in the northeast.

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea* Large numbers at Gammans and at several localities in the northeast.

Cape Starling (C Glossy S) *Lamprotornis nitens* Common and widespread, except in the extreme northeast.

Greater Blue-eared Starling (G B-e Glossy S) *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* A small flock at Kunene.

Meves's Starling ◊ (M's Long-tailed S) *Lamprotornis mevesii* Common and conspicuous in the north.

Burchell's Starling ◊ *Lamprotornis australis* Fairly common in the northeast.

Violet-backed Starling (Plum-coloured S) *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* A few seen in the northeast.

Pale-winged Starling ◊ *Onychognathus naboroupp* Seen at The Vineyard, Huab, Namibgrens and Erongo.

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus* Scattered sightings of pairs and small parties in the north.

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* Singles at Ndhovu.

Groundscraper Thrush *Psophocichla litsitsirupa* Many good sightings, mostly in lodge gardens.

Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libonyana* A few good sightings in woodland in the northeast and at Shakawe.

White-browed Robin-Chat (Heuglin's C) *Cossypha heuglini* Great views of pairs at Ndhovu and Shakawe.

Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush ◊ *Cichladusa ruficauda* Great views along the Kunene River.

White-browed Scrub Robin (W-b Robin) *Erythropygia leucophrys* Several good sightings in the north. See Note.

Kalahari Scrub Robin ◊ (Kalahari R) *Erythropygia paena* Several good sightings in the dry bush.

Karoo Scrub Robin (Karoo R) *Erythropygia coryphoeus* Great views of several at Namibgrens. See Note.

Herero Chat ◊ *Namibornis herero* Great views (easy this year) of 5 birds at Spreetshoogte Pass.

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata* A few in Etosha National Park. First seen at Avis Dam.



Waterholes in Etosha attract a variety of birds. Here, Red-headed Finch, Black-throated Canary, Red-billed Quelea and Ring-necked Dove.

Mountain Wheatear (M Chat) *Oenanthe monticola* Fairly common in hilly areas in the west.

Familiar Chat (Red-tailed C) *Oenanthe familiaris* Several observations around habitation, mostly in the west.

Karoo Chat ◊ *Emarginata schlegelii* Three on the way from Walvis Bay to Uis.

Tractrac Chat ◊ *Emarginata tractrac* Good views in the Namib desert.

Ant-eating Chat ◊ (Southern A-e C) *Myrmecocichla formicivora* Scattered sightings.

Short-toed Rock Thrush ◊ *Monticola brevipes* Several good sightings in the west, at Kunene and at Erongo.

Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina* Recorded twice woodland in the northeast.

Pale Flycatcher (Mouse-coloured F, Pallid F) *Bradornis pallidus* Two in woodland in the northeast.

Chat Flycatcher ◊ *Bradornis infuscatus* Several good sightings in the arid west and also at Etosha.

Marico Flycatcher ◊ *Bradornis mariquensis* A common and widespread bird of the dry bush.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* Half a dozen or so in the northeast.

Ashy Flycatcher (Blue-grey F) *Muscicapa caerulescens* Great views at the Kunene River.
Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* Great views at Shakawe.
Amethyst Sunbird (African Black S) *Chalcomitra amethystina* Seen well twice.
Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* Seen well on several occasions throughout the tour.
Marico Sunbird *Cinnyris mariquensis* Seen well on a number of occasions throughout the tour.
Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus* Great views in the Mahango.
White-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris talatala* Seen in woodland throughout the north.
Dusky Sunbird ◊ *Cinnyris fuscus* Fairly common in the dry bush in the west and also seen at Erongo.
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali* A common bird of the dry bush.
Sociable Weaver ◊ *Philetairus socius* Locally common in the arid west and at Okaukuejo in Etosha N.P.
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Common in the towns.
Great Sparrow *Passer motitensis* Seen well at Namibgrens, Etosha and Erongo Wilderness Lodge.
Cape Sparrow ◊ *Passer melanurus* Great views at various locations.
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffusus* Common and widespread.
Yellow-throated Petronia *Gymnoris superciliaris* Good views of a pair in woodland near Rundu.
Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* Seen well on several occasions in the north.
Scaly-feathered Weaver ◊ (S-f Finch) *Sporopipes squamifrons* Seen well a number of times.
Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak W) *Amblyospiza albifrons* Great views in the garden at Shakawe.
Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocellaris* Several seen at Shakawe.
Holub's Golden Weaver (Golden W) *Ploceus xanthops* Fairly common in riverine vegetation in the north.
Southern Brown-throated Weaver *Ploceus xanthopterus* Very common around the lodge at Shakawe.
Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* Three in a garden on the way to Kunene.
Southern Masked Weaver (Masked W) *Ploceus velatus* Common and widespread, especially in the south.
Village Weaver (Spotted-backed W) *Ploceus cucullatus* A colony at Rundu SW, and seen at Ndhovu and Shakawe.
Chestnut Weaver *Ploceus rubiginosus* Only two seen.
Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* Two scattered sightings.
Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* Very few! Only seen tree times, and in small numbers.
Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix* Small parties at Gammans and Onesi Dam.
Fan-tailed Widowbird (Red-shouldered Widow) *Euplectes axillaris* Three at Rundu and 3 at Shakawe.
Green-winged Pytilia (Melba Finch) *Pytilia melba* Five widely scattered sightings.
Red-headed Finch ◊ *Amadina erythrocephala* Fairly common.
Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* Scattered sightings.
Jameson's Firefinch *Lagonosticta rhodopareia* Great views of two pairs at Shakawe.
Blue Waxbill (Blue-breasted Cordon-bleu) *Uraeginthus angolensis* Fairly common and widespread.
Violet-eared Waxbill ◊ *Uraeginthus granatinus* Seen well on several occasions.
Cinderella Waxbill ◊ *Estrilda thomensis* (NT) Great views of a small group near the Kunene River. See Note.
Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* Small flocks noted a number of times.
Black-faced Waxbill ◊ *Estrilda erythronotos* A fairly common bird of the dry bush, first seen well at the Avis Dam.
African Quailfinch *Ortygospiza fuscocrissa* Great views at Onesi Dam and at Etosha.
Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Scattered sightings, first seen – a male- at Avis Dam.
Shaft-tailed Whydah *Vidua regia* Small numbers recorded.
Long-tailed Paradise Whydah (Eastern P W) *Vidua paradisaea* Seen well at Etosha.
Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis* Fairly common in the south and west, and also seen at Rundu and Shakawe.
African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* Seen well on several occasions along the Kunene River and Okavango.
African Pipit (Grassveld P) *Anthus cinnamomeus* First seen at Onesi Dam then regularly in the north.
Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* Seen well at Namibgrens.
Buffy Pipit *Anthus vaalensis* Great views of one in Etosha.
Black-throated Canary *Crithagra atrogularis* A fairly common and widespread bird, often seen at waterholes.
Yellow-fronted Canary (Y-eyed C) *Crithagra mozambica* Seen on several occasions in woodland in the northeast.
Yellow Canary ◊ *Crithagra flaviventris* Good views of several in the Windhoek area and about 10 at Etosha.
White-throated Canary ◊ *Crithagra albogularis* Good views of two at Spreetshoogte.
Lark-like Bunting ◊ *Emberiza impetuani* Good views on three dates.
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting (C-b Rock B) *Emberiza tahapisi* Widespread.
Cape Bunting ◊ *Emberiza capensis* Good views at Avis Dam and at Erongo.

Golden-breasted Bunting (African G-b B) *Emberiza flaviventris* Several good sightings near Rundu.



A pair of Damara Terns along the coast north of Walvis Bay.

MAMMALS

Angolan Epauletted Fruit Bat *Epomophorus angolensis* Five at Kunene Lodge.

Striped Mouse *Rhabdomys pumilio* One seen on the way to Namibgrens.

Black-tailed Tree Rat *Thallomys nigricauda* One photographed at Ndhovu lodge.

Dassie Rat *Petromus typicus* Great views at Dolomite and Erongo Wilderness Lodge.

Ground Squirrel (Cape Ground S) *Xerus inauris* Many sightings in the south and at Etosha.

Mountain Ground Squirrel *Xerus princeps* Seen at Huab.

Striped Tree Squirrel (Kuhl's T S) *Funisciurus congicus* Seen at Dolomite Camp and along the Kunene River.

Tree Squirrel (Smith's Bush S) *Paraxerus cepapi* Seen in the eastern section of Etosha and at Shakawe.

Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis* Seen on the drive to Walvis Bay.

Rock Dassie (Cape R Hyrax) *Procavia capensis* Seen at the Avis Dam, Namibgrens, Spreetshoogte and Erongo.

African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* Several great sightings at Etosha.

Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra* Several good sightings in the Namib desert and western section of Etosha.

Burchell's Zebra *Equus burchelli* Common at Etosha and also seen in the Mahango.

Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* Fantastic views of 8 at Etosha, including two by day.

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* Common along the Okavango at Ndhovu, the Mahango and Shakawe.

Warthog *Phacochoerus aethiopicus* Commonly encountered at Etosha and along the roadside in the east.

Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis* Many great sightings at Etosha.

Blue Wildebeest (Brindled Gnu) *Connochaetes taurinus* Common at Etosha and also seen in the Mahango.

Red Hartebeest (Hartebeeste) *Alcelaphus buselaphus* Great views of several small groups at Etosha.

Tsessebe (Sassaby) *Damaliscus lunatus* Good views of at least 3 in the Mahango.

Common Duiker (Grey D) *Sylvicapra grimmia* Good views of one near Huab.

Springbok (Springbuck) *Antidorcas marsupialis* Common in the Namib desert and abundant at Etosha.

Klipspringer *Oreotragus oreotragus* Seen near Reheboth and at Spreetshoogte.

Damara Dik-Dik (Kirk's D-D) *Madoqua kirkii* Close views in Etosha.

Steenbok (Steinbok) *Raphicerus campestris* Seen well on many occasions, mostly at Etosha.

Impala *Aepyceros melampus* Common at Etosha ('Black-faced') and in the Mahango (regular).
Roan (R Antelope) *Hippotragus equinus* Great views of 2 in the Mahango.
Sable (S Antelope) *Hippotragus niger* 10 in the Mahango.



African Wild Cat

Gemsbok (Oryx) *Oryx gazella* Five in the Namib desert and well over 200 at Etosha.
African Buffalo (Cape B) *Syncerus caffer* Small numbers in the Mahango.
Kudu (Greater K) *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* Fairly common and widespread in the bush.
Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus* Two by the river at Ndhovu Lodge and two in the Mahango.



Spotted Hyena, left, and a male Lion, right.

Reedbuck (Common R) *Redunca arundinum* Seen at Ndhovu and 5 in the Mahango.
Waterbuck (Common W) *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* Small groups by the river from Ndhovu Lodge.
Red Lechwe (Lechwe) *Kobus leche* At least 50 on both our visits to the Mahango.
Spotted Hyaena *Crocuta crocuta* Superb views of up to 10 on the plains near Okaukuejo at Etosha.
Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* Amazing views of a female with her 2 cubs at Etosha.

Lion *Panthera leo* Good views of a female at night, then a single male and a group of females at Etosha.
African Wild Cat *Felis lybica* One seen very well at Etosha.
Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis* One seen by some at Etosha.
Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas* Good views on several occasions at Etosha.
Spotted-necked Otter *Lutra maculicollis* Seen at Ndhovu Lodge.
Suricate (Meerkat) *Suricata suricatta* Good views of a small group in the desert near Walvis Bay.
Yellow Mongoose (Bushy-tailed Meerkat) *Cynictis penicillata* Two sightings of three individuals.
Slender Mongoose *Galerella sanguinea* Seen twice during the tour.
Black Mongoose *Galerella nigrata* One seen at Erongo.
Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* Good views of about 50 in the grounds of Namutoni Lodge at Etosha.
Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus* Commonly encountered along the roadside and also seen in the Mahango.
Vervet Monkey *Cercopithecus aethiops* Seen well at the Kunene River, in the Mahango and at Shakawe.
Cape Fur Seal (Afro-Australian F S) *Arctocephalus pusillus* About 15 in Walvis Bay and off the ocean beach.





Springbok at Etosha.



Female Cheetah with cubs.



NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Red-necked Spurfowl (Red-necked Francolin) *Pternistes afer*

The form concerned is nominate *afer* which is confined to Angola and north-western Namibia.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

This species winters in Walvis Bay in very large numbers.

African Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia [episcopus] microscelis*

The form concerned is often lumped in Asian Woollyneck *C. episcopus* with the name Woolly-necked Stork being used for the enlarged species.

Yellow-billed Egret *Egretta [intermedia] brachyrhyncha*

The form concerned is often lumped in Intermediate Egret *E. intermedia* with the name Intermediate Egret being used for the enlarged species.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

The subspecies involved is *pavesii* which breeds in sub-Saharan Africa.

Steppe (Common) Buzzard *Buteo [buteo] vulpinus*

Some authors consider the highly migratory form concerned to be of specific status but most lump it in Common Buzzard *B. buteo*.

Blue Crane *Anthropoides paradisea*

The isolated population of Blue Cranes centred on Etosha Pan is believed to number only 60 individuals.

Long-toed Lapwing (Long-toed Plover) *Vanellus crassirostris*

The subspecies concerned is *leucopterus* which is confined to the southern half of the species' range. This race shows far more white in the wing than the nominate race.

Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus*

The great bulk of the Southern African population (nominate *pallidus*), estimated at 11,200 individuals, winters in the Walvis Bay area.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

This is a very scarce winter visitor to the coast of Southern Africa, but it seems that a few individuals return year after year to Walvis Bay.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

This species is now known to be a regular visitor in very small numbers to southwest Africa. The origin of these birds is unknown, as no major wintering areas have been discovered in the Atlantic Ocean and the nearest regular wintering area is in the northern Indian Ocean, off the Arabian Peninsula. A few birds are regular on the Rift Valley lakes in East Africa, and it is possible that small numbers make an overland crossing from the Indian Ocean to Walvis Bay.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

The birds wintering in Southern Africa originate mainly from the Baltic Sea area, while birds from Western Europe winter mainly in West Africa.

Southern Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus erythrorhynchus*

Although the birds at Etosha have the dark faces typical of this 'species', some have dark eyes (a character of the Damara Red-billed Hornbill) and it seems that the relationship between these two forms is far from clear cut.

Bennett's Woodpecker *Campethera bennettii*

The subspecies occurring along the Kunene River is the plain-breasted form *capricorni*. The nominate form occurring in

northeastern Namibia has spotted underparts.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

This is one of the commoner Palearctic migrants in northern Namibia.

Carp's Tit (Carp's Black Tit) *Parus carpi*

Although very similar to the Southern Black Tit *P. niger*, this species exhibits little, if any, sexual dimorphism.

Sabota Lark *Mirafra sabota*

All birds seen were of the large-billed form which is sometimes split off as a separate species, Bradfield's Lark *M. naevia*.

Dune Lark *Certhilauda erythrochlamys*

This species is endemic to the dune habitats of coastal Namibia.

Benguela Long-billed Lark *Certhilauda benguelensis*

This species and the Karoo Long-billed Lark *C. subcoronata* are products of the splitting up of the original Long-billed Lark into five species.

Rufous-eared Warbler *Malcorus pectoralis*

This primarily South African species occurs in northern Namibia in a small isolated population centred on Etosha Pan.

Bare-cheeked Babbler *Turdoides gymnogenys*

This very attractive babbler is endemic to Namibia and Angola.

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

The subspecies concerned, *ovamboensis*, is more or less unstreaked on the underparts which can show quite a peachy wash. In this respect, it is superficially similar to the Eastern Bearded Robin *C. quadrivirgata*.

Karoo Scrub Robin (Karoo Robin) *Cercotrichas coryphoeus*

The species occurs at Namibgrens at the northern extremity of its range.

Cinderella Waxbill *Estrilda thomensis*

This pretty little estrildine finch is an Angolan specialty, occurring along the Kunene River at the southern extremity of its range.



