

ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO NAMIBIA
Etosha and the Skeleton Coast – Photographic Tour

05 – 19 October 2012



Leaders: Richard Coomber and Orlando Haraseb

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A Personal Diary

Friday, 05 October

The 2012 Ornitholidays party to Namibia was more like a group of friends meeting up at London's Heathrow Airport for everyone had travelled with me before. On a very wet October evening our South African Airways flight left for Johannesburg, the first leg of our journey to south-west Africa.

Saturday, 06 October

Somewhere over darkest Africa today slipped away to become yesterday and tomorrow became today. By daybreak we were well south of the Equator, landing at a sunny Johannesburg at 07.20, one hour ahead of London time, and ten minutes earlier than scheduled. We crossed to Terminal A for our onward flight to Windhoek, with just enough time for a coffee before boarding began at 08:45. Take-off scheduled for 09:30, was just a few minutes late and once clear of the city and its suburbs we flew over a parched landscape for most of the two-hour flight across to Namibia.

On arrival at Namibia's tiny international airport we saw African Palm and Little Swifts and Rock Martins hawking insects around the terminal buildings. Once through the formalities and re-united with our luggage we cleared Customs to meet our local guide, Orlando Haraseb.

Little was seen during the 35 km drive into Windhoek, one of the world's smallest capital cities. A Black-shouldered Kite perched on a fence soon after the airport and later Shelagh spotted a Chacma Baboon by the roadside. Our well-appointed guest house had been open less than a year, and once the rooms were allocated we met up for a light lunch before the arduous task of an afternoon's siesta.

Clouds built up in the afternoon and it became more humid than earlier, but would it rain? As it turned out – no, but it looked like it for a while. By late afternoon several of the party were birding around the small swimming pool at the back of the guest house, and where before dusk we had notched up nearly 20 species, including White-backed Mousebird, African Grey and Montiero's Hornbills, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Red-eyed Bulbul, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler, Wattled Starling and Dusky Sunbird.

Before dinner Orlando outlined our forthcoming safari using one of the road maps provided by the ground agents. After an excellent meal we retired to bed anticipating a great day tomorrow.

Sunday, 07 October

Hot and sunny. 32°C



Pale Chanting Goshawk

After breakfast and with the luggage loaded in the Land Cruiser's trailer we left the guest house just after 07:30. Windhoek was very quiet at that time on a Sunday morning, so we were soon heading south-west from the city on a good tarmac road for the first 70 kilometres south to Rehoboth. A Yellow-billed Kite in the suburbs was the only one of the tour and further on we passed a number of Chacma Baboons and two pairs of Purple Rollers. Most bridges had colonies of Little Swifts beneath them. One area near Rehoboth produced several Burchell's Starlings, but when we passed two Ostriches and then a small herd of Eland we realised, that unlike the starlings, they weren't tickable for behind game-fencing, they were 'captive'.

From Rehoboth, where a brief stop and a leg stretch were

appreciated, we turned off on a well-maintained gravel road, which carried even less traffic, so stopping to look at things was possible. Before long we were enjoying good views of Pale Chanting Goshawks and our first Sociable Weaver's nests that looked like thatch roofs attached to the top of telegraph poles, although it was quite some time before we had a good view of the builders themselves. A male Short-toed Rock-thrush posed perfectly in the early morning sunshine and soon after we found the first Lilac-breasted Roller of the tour. Mountain Wheatear and Black-chested Prinia were two other early additions. The Common Fiscals we saw were of the south-western race with a white supercilium. A potential split that may or may not happen for it is not generally accepted at the moment as intergrades occur. Should it happen then it will become known as Latakoo Shrike. No such problem with the bulky Chat Flycatcher, except that they never stayed long enough by the roadside for us to have a decent view, unlike the Kalahari Scrub-Robin, or the miserable looking Scaly-feathered Finches that posed well. During a stop to see two vultures that were flying over the road, Lappet-faced and White-backed, we also saw three Verreaux's Eagles soaring over a distant ridge. In turn we were watched and photographed by a minibus of Japanese tourists, who stopped because they thought we had found something interesting. We had, but not to them, so we were soon left in peace again.

By late morning we reached Guisis, chosen by Orlando for our picnic as the spot overlooked a large lake, teeming with birds most of which we might have seen at Windhoek water treatment works yesterday, had we not had the luxury of a siesta. From the tables and stools he'd set-up we watched Pied Avocets feeding in the shallows along with a few Black-winged Stilts, whilst along the water's-edge were Little Stints and Ruff down for the winter from the Northern Hemisphere. Blacksmith Lapwing and Three-banded and Kittlitz's Plovers were also seen, the latter appeared to be nesting nearby, although we couldn't find the well-concealed nest. Egyptian Geese, South African Shelduck, some with ducklings, Red-billed Ducks, Cape Shoveler and Maccoa Duck, a stiff-tail, represented the wildfowl. Common Moorhens were found along the shore in places and in this part of the world the coot were Red-knobbed, as the Crested Coot of Spain is also known. Alpine and Bradfield's Swifts were coming in for a quick drink at a rate of knots and zooming away as quickly into the blue yonder.



Rüppell's Korhaan

Onwards once more and into higher and rockier country, where more Mountain Wheatears were seen. With the trailer in tow we were unable to use the very steep and rugged Spreetshoogte route; instead we reached the plains of the Namib through the Remhoochte Pass further south. On the way we stopped for a party of Namaqua Sandgrouse by the roadside and watched a soaring Secretarybird - not the usual view of the species. During a stroll, overlooking one of several streams that were still flowing after last season's excellent rains, Marbled Rubber Frogs were seen – real frogs and not a child's toy as perhaps their name suggests!



Lanner Falcon

Once we reached the flat grasslands we headed towards Solitaire for a rest stop, but we stopped shortly before arriving to watch a Lanner Falcon and a Booted Eagle soaring together over the road. At Solitaire a well-placed piece of fruit attracted a number of species including Sociable

Weaver, Cape Sparrow and Southern Masked Weavers. More were seen around the back of the buildings, this time attracted by pools of water in the 'garden'. However, we still had a way to go, so soon after 16:00 we were on the road again. Before long we were watching a distant Secretarybird behaving 'properly', and seeing several Rock Kestrels and another Lanner that posed well in a tree. Our first Pygmy Falcons were seen a bit further on, a pugnacious tiny raptor that takes over a nesting hole in a Sociable Weaver's colony. There were mammals too - Black-backed Jackal, Wildebeest, Oryx, Springbok and Steenbok.

It was almost 18:30 when we arrived at our lodge just inside the entrance gate to Sossusvlei and within Namib-Naukluft National Park. From the reception and dining area a long wooden boardwalk led to our spacious rondavels overlooking the Namib grasslands to the dunes and mountains beyond. Behind was a large red mountain where perhaps the Spotted Eagle-Owls heard during the night lived. After dinner we were ready for bed after the day's drive.

Monday, 08 October

Overcast initially, long sunny periods developing. 30°C

To maximise our time at Sossusvlei we left the lodge just after 06:15, having had a caffeine fix and a snack. We headed all the way down to the end of the 4x4 track, some 60 kilometres into the heart of the dune system. We stopped briefly to see the apology for a sunrise behind distant mountains, with a large herd of Oryx grazing in the mid-distance and also for some Ostriches. Even so, other tourists were there before us, some already up on the top of the large Dune 45 by the time we passed, and others up on the dunes overlooking Deadvlei, our first location of the day.

Walk to Deadvlei



The walk of just over a kilometre to Deadvlei was relatively easy, not all sandy for in places we walking on 'pavements' of baked mud, a reminder that years ago after a period of good rainfall this whole area became a large lake that no doubt teems with waterbirds. Today we just saw a few Cape Sparrows and Pied Crows until, on reaching Deadvlei, a Ludwig's Bustard was seen in flight a couple of times. The vlei was in stark contrast to the red dunes that surrounded the one kilometre wide depression. From its floor of white baked mud the skeletal remains of dead Camel Thorns stood. Long ago there was sufficient moisture for these trees to grow and survive to maturity, but then they drowned during a prolonged flood that also laid down the floor of mud to form the aptly named Deadvlei seen today. Across on the side of the dunes to the west two Oryx were feeding on low bushes and grasses. Kate decided that she would strike out and try and get some closer photos, which she might have had they not wandered off, but she did



create some great images as she walked amongst the old trees as the sun broke through at last. All was not lost for as she rejoined the rest of the party returning to the Land Cruiser for breakfast, another Oryx, feeding from one bush to another close to the path, gave us wonderful views and amazing photo opportunities as it passed only metres away.



Cape Sparrow

The Deadvlei car park was not the place for breakfast, but nearby another depression, Sossusvlei itself, was and there beneath a shady Camel Thorn Orlando set out the tables and stools for our meal. With fresh tea and coffee as well as our breakfast packs it was the perfect place to discuss the morning in the company of some hopeful Cape Sparrows. Whilst Deadvlei is now dry, Sossusvlei can still hold water after good rains and those that fell six months or so ago filled the vlei. A lake covering several hundred square metres remained and attracted birds – 14 Pied Avocets, a few Little Stints, a Three-banded Plover, two Ruff and our first Wood and Curlew Sandpipers, one of each.

We still had some target birds to see and as we drove back out of the area Orlando spotted one of them as we drove across the gravel plains, Burchell's Courser. There was an adult and well-grown youngster, but they were just too far away for a worthwhile picture. The main target

bird however was Dune Lark, a very localised species with, as its name suggests, a very specific habitat requirement. Off the tarmaced entrance road a couple of low, well-vegetated dunes come close to the road, which is where we began searching. As we left the vehicle we had excellent views of a Shovel-snouted Lizard, doing its trick of lifting its feet off the hot sand, an action much-loved by wildlife film makers visiting the area. Soon afterwards the Dune Lark found us as two birds chased one another until they disappeared from view. As we searched the sand was criss-crossed with footprints from last night. Hairy-footed Gerbils and lizards had been very active; a Black-backed Jackal had passed by and from earlier today there were lark prints around many of the clumps of coarse desert grass. Whilst searching I came across the track of a Peringuey's (Sidewinding) Adder, a sand-dwelling snake that had buried itself in the sand beneath a large clump of coarse desert grass. We didn't poke around in search of the snake for a Dune Lark appeared nearby feeding and sheltering from the blazing sun amongst similar clumps of grass. With careful positioning we had great views, the best I had ever had, as it scurried from one tuft to another, obviously very reluctant to fly at this time of day.



Dune Lark

With that we returned towards the lodge, stopping for Double-banded Courser and a Ground Agama (lizard) on the way to the filling station, where Orlando topped up the fuel tanks ahead of our long drive tomorrow, and where lunch was bought for it was almost 15:00 and a 'proper' lunch at the lodge was over. In fact as we'd had a late breakfast, time didn't matter too much. A three hour siesta followed before we drove a couple of kilometres from the lodge to Sesriem Canyon, where Pale-winged Starlings, Speckled Pigeons, and later a number Bradfield's and just a few African Black Swifts came to roost within its steep conglomerate walls. The birds, and a spectacular sky to the west as the sun neared the horizon, made a great end to a truly wonderful day in the Namib-Naukluft National Park.

Tuesday, 09 October

Hot and sunny. 34°C, but much cooler on the coast - only 20°C

Following an early breakfast we loaded and began our journey northwards to Swakopmund, with excellent views of a pair of Rufous-eared Warblers on the edge of the car park before we started. Hundreds of Grey-crowned Sparrow-larks were coming to



Rufous-eared Warbler

the small pools below the lodge. A quick stop at Sesriem Canyon gave us good views of the grey form of Mountain Wheatear seen last night as the light faded. With that it was on to Solitaire, although two new birds were added before we reached the main road – Tractrac Chat and Black-chested Eagle. Soon we found another raptor that puzzled Orlando and I initially as the group were watching a Desert Cisticola on the roadside fence. When our raptor eventually flew we realised that it was a sub-adult Jackal Buzzard, a Southern African endemic, near the northern end of its range. It was probably the first that one of our parties has seen in Namibia. Continuing we passed Rock Kestrel, Short-toed Rock-thrush, the occasional Springbok, Ostriches and a few Oryx here and there. The refuelling stop at Solitaire produced Red-headed Finches and a Lark-like Bunting as well as a fine male Southern Masked Weaver building his nest and trying to attract a female.

Pressing on we found Chat Flycatchers, Mountain Wheatears and the occasional Rock and Greater Kestrel on the fences and telegraph poles until the habitat changed to become more arid and striking when we re-entered Namib-Naukluft National Park. As we neared the Gaub Pass Orlando spotted the first Hartmann's Mountain Zebras. From the road we must have seen 40 or more of this uncommon species scattered over a wide area in small groups. From a view-point overlooking Kuiseb Canyon we looked at the mica-schist and engaged with the emptiness of the landscape dominated by rock, a few stunted trees and yellow grass. In the canyon sufficient subterranean water enabled acacias to grow to full-size. It was down there we had lunch, but other people had beaten us to the shade of the spreading Ana Thorns (*Acacia albida*), so we set our tables in the shade of the arches of the bridge that carried the road across the now dry riverbed. As the thermometer rose steadily to 34.5°C in the shade, Dusky Sunbirds fed on yellow trumpet flowers and Rock Hyrax scurried away from the more exposed areas to the safety of the rockier slopes. We'd hoped for Verreaux's Eagle, but were disappointed.

The endless straight road requires concentration for the occasional dip can catch the unwary. Orlando treated the seemingly benign road with great care and respect. It was birdless, although that changed when we turned off and headed towards Swakopmund via Welwitschia Plains and an area known as the Moon Landscape along a series of minor gravel roads. Soon after passing a large flock of some 40 Ostriches we reached an artificial waterhole, where there was another group some 20+ strong as well as a very mangy Black-backed Jackal and a lone Springbok. We came across larks, not everyone's idea of fun, but without too much effort we found Red-capped, Stark's, Sabota and finally Gray's Lark. Onwards and near another waterhole there were Lappet-faced and White-backed Vultures dropping in for a quick drink with yet more Ostriches. Other raptors on this section seen included another Black-chested Snake-eagle, Greater Kestrel and a Lanner Falcon.



Welwitschia

Further on at Welwitschia Plains we noticed a marked change in temperature, for as we neared the coast the effect of the offshore Benguela Current was being felt for it was degrees cooler than at lunchtime. Orlando took us around three or four Welwitschias, a strange 'tree' whose two leaves become shredded by the wind thus appearing to have many thinner leaves, and whose 'trunk' is below the ground!

Today we had seen many changes in the landscape as we'd headed north, but perhaps none were as strange as the eroded scene that had perhaps rightly earned the name of Moon Landscape – quite extraordinary and no doubt a nightmare if one had discovered it when travelling across this land by ox-cart!

Onwards once more and as we neared Swakopmund the road crossed the bed of the Swakopmund River, where pools ended the bird famine. Greater Flamingos overshadowed the shorebirds that included Pied Avocets, Black-winged Stilts as well as wintering Curlew Sandpipers, Little Stints and Ruff. Local shorebirds included the salt-pan loving Chestnut-banded Plover and a single Three-banded Plover. The pools were deep enough for Little Grebes to fish as Cape Teal dabbled around the muddy margins. Time was pressing on as we had to as well, so before long we reached our destination in Swakopmund, the German-style town on the edge of the South Atlantic Ocean. Our base for the next two nights was a modern, comfortable guesthouse with well-appointed rooms.

An hour or so later we drove down to the seafront and enjoyed an excellent meal at the Tug, a restaurant overlooking the ocean where Hartlaub's Gulls loafed and Cape Gannets flew distantly by as the sun set as a great orange orb beyond the western horizon.

Wednesday, 10 October

Cloudy during the morning, sunny and breezier in the afternoon. 20°C.

After breakfast we drove south from Swakopmund to the former South African enclave of Walvis Bay, home to the largest port along this stretch of the African coast, for the huge bay offers the safest anchorage for commercial shipping for probably thousands of kilometres. From the heart of the docks and the fishing port we embarked on a voyage of exploration of the bay. While we waited for other passengers to arrive there was time to photograph a motley group of grubby Greater Flamingos feeding in the shallows along with an interesting collection of shorebirds – Common Ringed and Grey Plovers, Curlew Sandpiper and Sanderling. John noticed that one of the latter sported a collection of colour rings and a red flag on its legs. As the result of an email from Nigel, back at the Ornitholidays' office, we learned that earlier this autumn it had been trapped and ringed in Ghana on its way south a matter of a few weeks or perhaps just a few days ago. The coordinators of that particular ringing programme had not yet had the details in from the field at the time of writing.



Bottle-nosed Dolphin

When the other passengers arrived we left the smelly shore behind and after passing large trawlers and a large tanker, lifted out of the water by a dry dock, we headed north. Crested Terns were frequently seen and no doubt attracted the Pomarine Skua disappearing into the distance. We joined another boat that was watching a pod of Bottle-nosed Dolphins close to the sandy beach. Together the vessels motored along side-by-side, throwing up quite a wave where their wakes merged. That was the whole idea for very soon the dolphins came to surf the resultant wave – absolutely

brilliant! Another 'trick', laid on for us happened a couple of times during the morning – feeding of Cape Fur-

seals, not just tossing a fish over the side, but inviting a 'friendly' fur-seal (the males are quite large) aboard and feeding it from the wheel! Our skipper encouraged it to return to the sea by throwing another morsel over the stern and driving away as the seal dived in after it!

Nearby was a huge wooden guano platform constructed several hundred metres from shore to provide nesting facilities for Cape Cormorants and other seabirds in exchange for harvesting their droppings. Thousands of Cape Cormorants were in residence and one or two smaller Crowned Cormorants were found as well as a handful of Great White Pelicans. Surprisingly a number of Greater Flamingos were roosting on the middle of the platform as well. As we left thrown fish attracted some of the pelicans closer to the boat.

From that side of the bay, where the low clouds had lifted, we crossed to Pelican Point on the south side and back into the chilly and gloomy conditions once more. Huge herds of fur-seals lined the shore of the sandy point, Cape Gannets were passing and from time to time so did White-chinned Petrels and a few Sooty Shearwaters. Several hundred metres further south a Subantarctic Skua was harrying gulls and terns over the breaking waves, but it never came any closer. It wasn't all seabirds, for while our vessel and the other tourist craft were out there Benguela or Heaviside's Dolphins appeared. This is a local speciality,

known only from the waters of the Benguela upwelling between Namibia and the Cape of Good Hope. It is very poorly known for according to Lyall Watson's *Seaguide to Whales of the World* (1981) the first known specimens date back to the 1820s, another was captured in 1856, and then nothing further until a stranding near Cape Town in 1965. Three were captured in 1969 and that is the end of the story as far as that book is concerned, but we have seen it on a number of our Namibian tours since 1988.

Motoring along the inside of Pelican Point we passed a flock of several hundred Crested Terns resting on the sand, amongst which were a few Sandwich Terns. Soon after, as we were enjoying a glass of sparkling wine, and as some of us enjoyed the picnic lunch provided, small parties of Common/Arctic Terns flew by. After stopping to see a disused diamond-dredging vessel that now was home to a thriving colony of Cape Cormorants we returned to port, where Orlando awaited us.

Before beginning the afternoon's birding in the sunshine we stopped at a small café for sandwiches for those who had not felt like eating earlier, and a round of coffees and teas for all. The seafront a few hundred yards further on is a great place to get a feel for the birding on the upper reaches of the Walvis Bay. Hundreds of Greater Flamingos filter-fed in the shallows or roosted in small groups on sandbars. Around a corner we could see that there were not just hundreds, but thousands as far as the eye could see. Eventually we came across a small group of Lesser Flamingos, which today were outnumbered by Greater 500:1 or even more!

Greater Flamingo and Sanderling



There were a great number of shorebirds and terns as well, but nothing new except for Common Greenshank and Bar-tailed Godwits, and as far as the terns were concerned, Arctic and Caspian, 40+, were also additions.

We then headed out to the salt works, where many more shorebirds from the Palearctic fed along edges of lagoons close to the road so we had excellent views of Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint and Sanderling. Common Ringed Plover was also present in smaller numbers and the further we drove the more Pied Avocets we admired. There were a couple of goodies too - our first Marsh Sandpipers, about 15 or so, and a scattering of Red-necked Phalaropes, 14 in total. Phalaropes are recorded annually here, with numbers having increased slightly over recent years. Also seen were well over 100 Chestnut-banded Plover where we turned around, and Cape Teal and Black-necked Grebes on some of the larger lagoons.



We threaded our way back along the salt roads to Walvis Bay, and on to Swakopmund, where the checklist was brought up-to-date before we went to dinner at Kückis', a long-established restaurant near the guest house.

Thursday, 11 October

Overcast initially, becoming sunny later as we headed inland from the coast. Up to 30°C

After breakfast we planned a brief stop at the Tug to see if there were any tubenoses passing south. They weren't, but instead a vast shoal of presumably anchovies attracted dozens of Cape Gannets and vast numbers of Cape Cormorants for there must have been several hundred thousand birds at the feast with long sinuous lines stretching to the northern skyline. A walk along the jetty took us closer to the action and right to the edge of that maelstrom of birds. There were also some Cape Fur-seals and a pod of Bottle-nosed Dolphins, but we paid scant attention to either. Afterwards a brief stop at the town's excellent bookshop allowed some retail therapy before we headed north to the local salt works.

Swakopmund salt works is small by comparison with the one we visited yesterday at Walvis, but attracts a good variety of birds nevertheless, including wintering Palearctic shorebirds and flamingos of both species.



To a huge guano platform, flocks of cormorants were returning from the south – all with full tummies I guess! Beyond, from a vantage point overlooking the beach, we found a Eurasian Whimbrel, watched a Bar-tailed Godwit fly by and scoped a party of four Black Oystercatchers further along the shoreline.

Our next stop north was at the lichen fields that stretch inland from the road. Some 70 or so species are recorded from the area and a few drops of water showed how quickly the apparently lifeless lichens could spring into life. Along the coast, and for a few kilometres inland, the lichens receive moisture from the fog that drifts in from the Benguela current on some 90 days a year. This delicate eco-system is so easily damaged by 4WD vehicles being driven off-road that the tracks they make can be 'permanent' for hundreds of years.

The Skeleton Coast was living up to its name, for just south of Hentiesbaai a trawler came ashore less than a year ago and is now both a tourist attraction and home to a thriving colony of White-breasted Cormorants. As we watched White-fronted Plovers running along the sand we added a new species of wader – Shelagh! An incoming wave moved faster than she could!

The drive inland from Hentiesbaai crossed mile after mile of featureless desert, No birds, no nothing except for a line of telegraph poles marching relentlessly inland. Well, that's how it would have been normally, but today we passed a collection of extraordinary looking trucks and equipment being used in the filming of a new Mad Max film starring Mel Gibson.

Eventually we came out from beneath the coastal cloud bank and back into the sunshine of Africa. The flat coastal plain gave way to hills as we approached Uis and entered Damaraland, a unique landlocked region of Namibia, whose name has been given to many species, such as Damara Hornbill and the deadly spurge *Euphorbia damarana*. Our route turned off north-west just before Uis and after just a few kilometres Orlando spotted a pair of Benguela Long-billed Lark near the roadside, followed by a pair of Double-banded Coursers.

As we did a U-turn to continue our journey, a Northern Black Korhaan was admired and photographed as Orlando straightened the wheels. A smart Common Fiscal fed on termites just beside the Land Cruiser and was joined by a pair of Chat Flycatchers before our attention was drawn to another chat on a bush nearby. This was



Northern Black Korhaan



Herero Chat

an elusive Herero Chat, the Holy Grail of Damaraland birds, and over the next 10 minutes we had excellent views of this uncommon species found only in north-western Namibia and just over the border into Angola.

With lunch calling we carried on until we reached the dry Ugab River, where beneath the shade of a large Ana Tree we sat and ate our picnic. Above us was a Long-billed Crombec and a pair of Grey-backed Camaropteras, whilst nearby Southern White-crowned Shrikes and a Ruppell's Parrot were also seen. Pressing on our route took us deeper into Damaraland, with its red mountains and grasslands dotted with acacias. An immature African Hawk-Eagle was resting beneath one acacia having just caught a small Rock Hyrax, but it decided we were too close for it flew to rocks further away.

By late afternoon we reached our lodge with its beautiful rondavel huts built into the huge boulders of a large kopi. Looking out from this idyllic location it was hard to believe that just two months ago the entire kitchen

and dining area had burnt down one night. A charred wooden step leading up to the dining room was the only sign, for everything else had been cleared and rebuilt.

After an hour or more siesta we climbed the easy path to the top of the kopi to enjoy sundowners and nibbles overlooking the emptiness of this part of Damaraland. With the afternoon build-up of clouds now retreating the sunset made a great subject for our cameras.

Following what was one of the best dinners of the tour so far we retired to bed.

Friday, 12 October

Cloudless and hot, with a refreshing breeze in late afternoon. 34°C.

After breakfast we drove across the surrounding plains to the dry riverbed of the Aba Huab, where soon we were watching more of the local specialities including Bare-cheeked Babblers, Damara Hornbill, Carp's Tit and Rosy-faced Lovebird. Our target for the morning was to try and track Desert Elephants, so we headed down the river, sometimes driving along the sandy bed amongst the Ana Trees and sometimes along the plains to one side or the other. Greater Kudu was added to the list, just a female and sub-adults, but no male. Oryx and Springbok were seen quite often and a Steenbok ran off quickly as we approached. Pressing on we reached a small settlement near the confluence of the Aba Huab and the Okaremba, which flows down from the Kamanjab direction passing through my son's farm on the way.

An elderly farmer gave us directions and we carried on downstream, where eventually Orlando spotted fresh tracks crossing the sand. It was just one animal, so better than nothing. We headed into the surrounding bush and after several minutes with Orlando acting as driver-cum-tracker we found it. Shelagh spotted its grey bulk ahead, but getting round to see the bull Elephant properly was a different matter Orlando manoeuvred the bulky Land Cruiser through the bushes and trees admirably. It resulted in a great view, but as we followed when the Elephant moved on we became well and truly stuck in a patch of very soft sand and in spite of Orlando's best efforts we were held fast. Fortunately we were beneath a low basalt hill, whose top had fragmented with the extremes of hot (day) and cold (night) temperatures experienced in this part of the world. As Orlando began work clearing the sand, Lynne and I tossed flat rocks down to the rocky hill's sandy slopes below. Eventually Orlando was able to jack up one wheel at a time and place rocks beneath the wheels. After sweating pints he was at last satisfied that he would be able drive out. We watched with baited breaths as he started the engine; it worked and after a bit of careful manoeuvring we were back in the riverbed and looking for the Elephant again. This time we had prolonged views as he fed and sometimes dusted himself on the bank. Half an hour and many photos later we left him, setting up our picnic tables several hundred yards away. He was still in view as we ate our lunch.



“Desert” Elephant

Unfortunately the problems in the sand meant we were unable to have a siesta back at the lodge before the late afternoon visit to Twyfelfontein, where Bushman engravings have been etched into the red sandstone over thousands of years. In many places across the Bushman's world there are ochre drawings beneath and on sheltered rock faces, but there are few places where the ancient peoples made similar engravings, for Twyfelfontein is probably the finest example. We waited 20 minutes or more at the visitor centre for the



Cape Bunting

temperature to drop a little and added a Cape Bunting to the list at the same time. Then we walked with a local guide, Tekla, along a track, beneath sandstone cliffs toward the remains of the old cob-walled homestead of the farmer who had lived here before it became a national monument. As Tekla filled us in with background information, an adult Verreaux's Eagle soared over the cliffs with its youngster. Over the next hour or so we followed the path that meanders around huge sandstone slabs across which Giraffes, Mountain Zebras, Greater Kudus and Black and White Rhinos raced, walked or stood on the rock 'canvases'. Some of the animals with either their hoof/paw print attached to the foot or tail might have served as a learning tool for the younger members of the nomadic people. The male Lion with five toes, rather than four,

is now considered to represent a shaman. There are raised platforms in front of some of the better engraved rock faces to permit much improved viewing positions and to prevent people climbing the galleries for a better view. Whilst Ostriches and African Penguins appeared as engravings, the only other 'real' birds of note were Mountain Wheatears and Pale-winged Starlings.

Before returning to our lodge we looked briefly at the nearby sites of Burnt Mountain and Organ Pipes. Back at the lodge there was time to freshen up and change before dinner.

Saturday, 13 October

Hot and sunny. 36+°C

We left the lodge just before 08:00 after breakfast, admiring the native foxgloves and other flowers, as the trailer was loaded, and then drove to the Petrified Forest. Overnight a fog bank had drifted in from the coast bringing much needed moisture to the wildlife and plants of the area.

The Petrified Forest used to be a site where one drove up, parked and wandered at will along the paths that meandered amongst the fossilised trees and the Welwitschias that grow there. Nowadays one requires a permit, takes a local guide and passes the inevitable curio shop. It all creates work for the local Damara people, which must be for the good and more especially it helps protect a very special site. Once a mighty river flowed here, which brought huge fallen trees from much further north, when Africa was part of the super continent, Gondwanaland. The now fossilised trunks have been broken by the extremes of temperature of the area and amongst them here and there grow small Welwitschia plants; small because so little moisture reaches this far inland.



Petrified Forest

Years ago the nearby town of Khorixas had a superb sewerage works. It was filthy and rundown, but the birds loved it. Then it was modernised (or perhaps sanitised would be a better description), the birds left and I believe for a while there was no access. Somewhat neglected again it has reverted once more, but now protected by a razor wire fence and an elderly security guard, who let us in to look at the birds. Surprisingly the first lagoon held an immature Greater Flamingo as well as Little Grebes, Red-billed Teal, Egyptian Geese, South African Shelduck, Wood and Common Sandpipers. African Palm Swifts sped overhead dwarfed by several Alpine Swifts. At the far end of the main lagoon a Groundscraper Thrush fed in the shade of an acacia. The next lagoon, although now 99.9% overgrown, held sufficient water and mud to attract

Three-banded Plover, Ruff, Curlew and Wood Sandpipers and Little Stint. Also seen within the ponds were Common Moorhen and Red-knobbed Coot, whilst nearby we found a Pearl-spotted Owlet and watched Namaqua Sandgrouse circling before coming in to drink.

The vehicle was refuelled at the filling station in Khorixas, which also saw a rise in its ice-cream and cold drink sales for by now it was getting pretty hot. Lunch was planned at the German bakery in Outjo, some 120 kms distant, but at least the road was tarmac and we made good progress. The service at the bakery was quite quick, so before too long we were on our way north to Etosha. Purple Rollers sat on telegraph poles and there was an extremely confiding Martial Eagle sitting on top of one pole, clearly showing us the differences between Martial and the smaller, but bigger-headed Black-chested Snake-eagle seen earlier.

Etosha National Park stretches across north-eastern Namibia and surrounds the fabled Etosha Pan. It is an area that has been featured on many wildlife films, and not without good reason, for it offers some of Africa's best game viewing around its water-holes. At the first, Ombika, we watched African Elephant, Southern Giraffe and Burchell's Zebras. Nearby were Wildebeest and Black-faced Impala, an endemic race.

The rest camp at Okaukuejo has had an up-market make-over in recent years. The rondavels have had a major make-over and are now surrounded by fencing. Ours were only a few metres from the viewing area overlooking the waterhole where, when we arrived, Elephants and Giraffes were drinking. A Common Sandpiper and our first Crowned Lapwing were seen. When I first visited 24 years ago there were trees and bushes around the water-hole. Now much of the vegetation has gone and the top soil too, perhaps both as a result of pressure on the habitat from the local Elephant population.



After a siesta during which the temperature at 17:00 was 36°C, we went for a wander seeing Pririt Batis, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Rattling Cisticola and Black-chested Prinia over by the public campsite, where a Pearl-spotted Owlet was calling intermittently, but not located. Nearer the swimming pool and dining room area we came across a confiding Groundscraper Thrush feeding on the recently watered lawn and found, in the trees above, a pair of Cardinal Woodpeckers and African Hoopoes, the latter being a much deeper orange than our species and also lacking in white markings across the primaries.

Birding was adjourned so we could freshen up and change for dinner, before meeting again by the waterhole, where just after sunset we saw a pair of Spotted Thick-knees and watched Double-banded Sandgrouse coming to drink. Later, after dinner, a Rufous-cheeked Nightjar skimmed across the area, but it was the two Black Rhinoceroses that attracted most attention. As they left three more single rhinos lumbered in to drink. One of the first two returned shortly afterwards, so we had four of these massive animals together around the

waterhole plus an Elephant and two Giraffes drinking at the same time. By 21:30 I left the ladies to enjoy watching the scene, so very African.

Sunday, 14 October

Hot and sunny.35°C

This morning's drive took us north-west from Okaukuejo, towards the natural spring at Okondeka, across flat plains crossed by lines of Springbok and Burchell's Zebras heading for 'our' waterhole. We hadn't gone far before we were treated to exceptionally good views of an African Wild Cat walking determinedly parallel to



African Wild Cat

the road only a few metres away much to the consternation of several pairs of Desert Cisticolas. Flocks of Grey-backed Sparrow-larks were heading to water, but species like Red-capped and Spike-heeled Larks were busy feeding amongst the roadside vegetation. Ant-eating Chats were seen for the first time on the tour, usually perched up on low bushes. Birds of prey were at a premium with only Pale Chanting Goshawk and Greater Kestrel being noted.

Although Etosha Pan at Okondeka was dry, a spring provided sufficient water to attract a Giraffe and Ostrich. Absent were the large numbers of antelope and zebras one

normally sees for a pride of Lions was resting beneath bushes overlooking the spring today. The male was resting out in the grass nearer the spring surveying the area when he wasn't dozing as the morning became hotter. Orlando's positioning of the vehicle was excellent, giving everyone the opportunity for some great photos and, when he did get up and stroll in the direction of his ladies, he came by and crossed the road just ahead of us!

Our return route took us south to Leeubron, where large Sociable Weavers' colonies are to be found in the acacias. One had been particularly large, but the tree had collapsed a few years ago from sheer weight of the colossal nest that had accumulated over the years. The drive produced good views of Ground Squirrels and more larks, including our first Pink-billed, but the most photogenic subject was a trotting Black-backed Jackal and a little further on three more that decided to stand and pose for us! We were almost back to Okaukuejo when a party of European Bee-eaters hawked insects and rested on trees near the road, but just too far away for the cameras unfortunately.

We took a mini-break enjoying the waterhole for half-an-hour. It was teeming with animals as swifts zipped in to drink with the local Rock Martins, who were joined briefly by a South African Cliff Swallow.

With just enough time to visit another waterhole before lunch Orlando decided the Newbrownii would be the best. On arrival he placed us in a good position to watch Oryx, Springbok and Burchell's Zebras drinking and several Ostriches hanging around the periphery. A pair at the water held the centre ground and wow betide



any others that tried to drink. It was only later that we realised that they were defending the water as they had 18 'small' chicks, each about the size of a large chicken. Then the Elephants arrived. Two bulls came in a few minutes apart to cover themselves with the white calcrete mud from one area and to drink their fill from another. After sloshing mud all over themselves they became truly white elephants. The best bird was a Stark's Lark amongst many Red-capped. We returned to camp for lunch and a siesta before returning to the fray later in the afternoon.



African Elephant

The afternoon game drive was quiet birdwise as we made our way to the water-hole at Gemsbokvlakte via Ombika. We enjoyed some great Giraffe watching until, shortly before reaching Ombika, we found three Lionesses, surely the reason for the deserted water-hole today. A number of bustards and korhaans were seen on the drive including Kori Bustard, Northern Black and Red-crested Korhaan.

Not long before we reached Gemsbokvlakte we found another vehicle watching something in the thick thorn bush surrounding the road. The high overland camping truck had the advantage of height, but almost as soon as we stopped a Black Rhino began to emerge from cover. Again we were in just the right place to see him come into the open before he crossed the road behind us. Somewhere he'd been wallowing for he was a white Black Rhino. Fantastic, which made the whole journey across to Gemsbokvlakte worthwhile for there was nothing at the water-hole itself!

With the clock ticking away as the sun sank we headed back to camp, where another Kori Bustard was drinking at the water-hole near to a Tawny Eagle. Dinner this evening was at a table set out on the lawn for our own personal barbeque. None of the hustle and bustle of the dining room this evening for it was an arrangement that Orlando had thought we would appreciate, and so we did.



Black Rhinoceros

The meal took a little longer than usual, but those who visited the flood-lit water-hole afterwards saw a female and well-grown Black Rhinoceros. Some also saw a Verreaux's Eagle Owl which Sandra managed to video in spite of the poor light when it perched near the viewing area. If only more of the party had stayed on this evening for nine, possibly 11, rhinos came in with up to eight being present at any one time; there were three or four females with large calves and three singles. Two bull Elephants seemed to have a bit of a trunk wrestling match after they had drunk their fill and before a small breeding herd arrived to distract them. There seemed to be a conflict

between the eles and rhinos for the best drinking position, but for one female rhino and her calf it wasn't a problem as they were standing out in the middle of the water, almost shoulder deep, drinking and just watching events around them. Also seen where two Spotted Hyenas, several Black-backed Jackals and a

Giraffe. As the Elephants and most of the Rhinos had left soon after 23:00 I decided to call it a day but what a memorable day!

Monday, 15 October

Hot and sunny. 38°C

As we walked across for breakfast this morning two African Cuckoos were pursuing one another near the water-hole. Later as Orlando was returning the keys to reception and checking us out of Okaukuejo there were some good birds around the car-park near the store, beginning with two non-breeding Pin-tailed Whydahs. Overhead European Bee-eaters were wheeling around alongside swifts and a Barn Swallow that flew over. In response to the Pearl-spotted Owlet whistle a male Marico Sunbird came in followed shortly after by Brubru, Black-backed Puffback, sparrows and weavers.

We drove on to Newbrownii, where all was peaceful with hundreds of Grey-backed Sparrow-larks and a number of Namaqua Sandgrouse joining the commoner mammals at the water-hole. The scene was similar at Gemsbokvlakte, where Burchell's Zebras were most numerous species, as they were at a number of other water-holes we visited in the course of the morning. At Olifantsbad we came across the first Red Hartebeest of the tour as well as the first male Greater Kudu with their long spiralling horns. A Little Grebe seemed strangely out of place in these surroundings, but in fact it was just the first of many we were to see during the drive across Etosha National Park during the day. A lone Chestnut-backed Sparrow-lark was an overdue addition to the list. Aus was the next water-hole visited and produced four splendid male Greater Kudu, a Tawny Eagle and Red-billed Teal. At Homob, where the game was massed on our side of the water-hole, we could see a Lioness watching intently from beneath a bush across the water. This water-hole is one of the artesian ones and has a large clump of reeds growing in the middle, where an African Jacana was seen.

From then on the drive took us closer to the seemingly endless dry Etosha Pan, where out in the heat shimmer fuzzy dots could be separated as either Ostriches or game animals crossing the emptiness. Sueda was white with dry salt and the little water there attracted a Kori Bustard, Blacksmith Lapwing and a Cape Teal. Charitsuab gave us the first Western Cattle Egrets of the tour as they fed around a herd of Springbok; both Cape and Red-billed Teal were also present. Next came Salvadora, a spring on the edge of Etosha Pan and in many ways is one of the most scenic in the park. Much the same in the way of wildlife was present as well as a pair of Secretarybirds striding across the adjacent grassy plains.



Booted Eagle

At Reitfontein were masses more animals, two more African Jacanas and a circling Booted Eagle. Barn and Red-breasted Swallows were seen as well as the usual wildfowl and shorebirds. As the temperature rose steadily into the high 30s°C we stopped to see what a couple of other cars were looking at away from the water – two Leopards! They were hidden by the grasses

growing around the base of a shady tree and until one sat up all one could see were ears. Unfortunately the view didn't get any better than that, just too far and too well hidden. Nearby my daughter-in-law's great-great-grandmother, Johanna Alberts, lies in a lone grave, having died during the Afrikaner's Dorstland trek from South Africa to Angola in 1876.



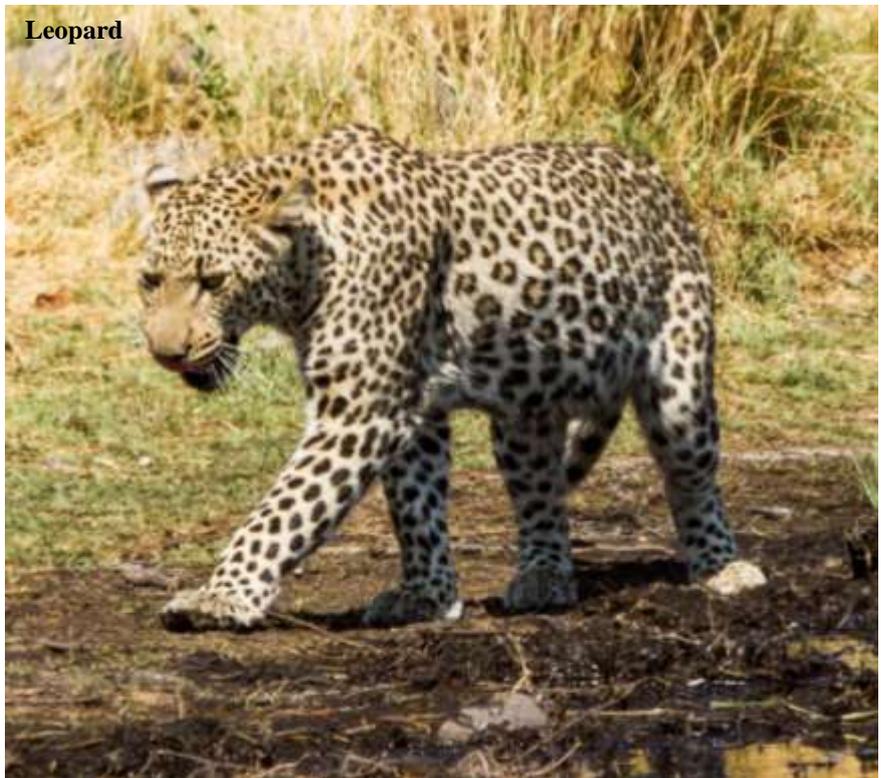
We reached Halali camp on schedule and after lunch a member of the camp staff showed us an African Scops Owl, perhaps not quite as well hidden in a mopane tree as sometimes. A Red-billed Buffalo-weaver was seen and we had better views than previously of a Southern White-crowned Shrike as it perched on the shady side of another mopane.

We still had a long way to go and things to see, beginning with a Martial Eagle's nest a few kilometres further on, but there were no adults around and it's possible the chick had fledged. Goas water-hole was well patronised by game and amongst the Red-billed Teal Lynne found a South African Shelduck, but it preferred to remain out of sight. African Pipits fed around the damp margins of the marsh, where Wood Sandpipers chased one another.

We'd heard that there was a male Leopard at Nuamses, one of the smaller water-holes, but on arrival it didn't look good for there was no sign of it and few other vehicles watching or waiting. Orlando had just parked when the cat appeared from cover on the other side of the rocky waterhole and came round towards us, stopping briefly in the shade of a

small bush before having a drink and then coming closer still, to settle into thick grass and become hidden from view – fantastic!

To get the feel of the Pan we went out to Pan Outlook, via a causeway that gave us 360° view of the pan – dry and baking hot - 38°C out there. A few more water-holes were visited, but little exciting was seen at either Kalkheuwel or Chudob. The former has been refurbished, returning to a mixture of water-hole and marshy pools, but alas this afternoon there was really very little there or at Chudob, another of the artesian water-holes.



Thinking ahead as ever Orlando decided to buy the permit for tomorrow's drive this evening, thus saving time tomorrow and giving us the opportunity to photograph a gang of Banded

Mongoose searching for food on the lawns outside the offices. There was just enough time before we had to be out of the park in the evening to visit just one more water-hole, Klein Namutoni, where a good selection of shorebirds and waterfowl were found including a pair of Cape Shoveler and a lone Red-knobbed Coot. Although a Tawny Eagle was perched nearby, it was only when a Martial Eagle suddenly appeared overhead that any real panic amongst the birds set-in. Swainson's Spurfowl and Crested Francolins were welcome additions to the birdlist and Damara Dik-dik was a new mammal tick.

Our lodge a few minutes drive outside the park had all the airs of being a boutique hotel, only the hornbills in the garden and some porcupine quills done up as an ornament reminded one that this was Africa. The rooms were very comfortable and well-appointed and this evening we were treated to another barbeque along with a party of other guests, who put their napkins on their seats first! It was a good meal on a warm African night beneath the stars.

Tuesday, 16 October

Very, very hot. 40°C

Giraffe



After breakfast we returned to Etosha National Park and on the drive found Greater Kudu, Giraffe, and Impala crossing the road. A pair of Red-breasted Swallows gave us good views at last. Klein Namutoni was our first stop where the scene was similar to yesterday evening, except that the Red-knobbed Coot had gone; its place being taken by a Whiskered Tern – a write-in on the checklist! We then took the circular loop known as Dik-dik Drive seeing a Spotted Hyena, but today there were more Damara Dik-dik's seen along the entrance road. We had another look at Klein Namutoni before we left the area. The variety of wildfowl and shorebirds was the same as last night, so the main interest lay with a gathering of 20+ Grey Go-away-birds in a caper bush before going to drink in just twos and threes.

After passing Fort Namutoni we turned north towards Andoni Plains in the far north of the park. Just before we crossed the causeway dividing Etosha Pan from Fischer's Pan (both were dry) we saw the only Capped Wheatear of the trip so far. Normally a bird of the plains, but this year there is so much grass around that both the wheatears and some of the larks are either hard to find, or perhaps more likely away in more suitable habitat elsewhere.

At Klein Okevi Giraffe, Greater Kudu and Warthog were present, but the main interest was in the birds, for many small seed-eating species were coming to drink including Red-billed Quelea, Black-faced, Blue and Violet-eared Waxbills and Black-throated and Yellow Canaries as well as many more Red-headed Finches. Further north at Tsumcor water-hole there was little to detract from our journey north.

We had travelled mainly through thorn scrub since leaving the pan, but eventually the road started to descend a gradual slope towards Andoni Plains, a vast grassy area that stretched to the northern perimeter of the park. The plain should be a great place for larks, pipits and Desert Cisticolas, but we saw remarkably few, instead of them being in their tens along the road. A fire had gone through the area a couple of months ago, turning vast areas of grassland to a blackened waste, but now green grass was beginning to appear. Disappointing, especially as there was also remarkably little at the water-hole – Cape and Red-billed Teal where there of course and along with a scattering wintering shorebirds from the Palearctic we found several Chestnut-banded Plover. Sadly no sign of the hoped-for Blue Cranes that are sometimes present. Orlando took us on a loop road back to the main road south again. Kori Bustards, Helmeted Guineafowl and a Secretarybird were already sheltering in the shade of small acacia bushes as the temperature soared to 40°C, or beyond. We were delighted to find a scattering of coursers amongst much smaller bushes. The first seen were all Burchell's with their grey napes, then after finding one Temminck's we came across eight or nine more.

European Bee-eater



The birding highlight of the drive back south was a party of Southern Pied Babblers along the roadside. This road was quite quiet from the point of view of traffic, but we did get an ear-splitting blast from a trumpeting Elephant that had been peaceful chomping away at a bush, until our passing disturbed him.

Double-banded Courser



It was just 13:00 by the time we returned to Mushara for an excellent light lunch and siesta. For some there was time for a swim, for others Common Scimitarbill, the various hornbills and a party of Black-faced Babblers were the attraction, whilst the third option was to sleep!

At 15:30 we reassembled for a drive that would take us along the southern side of Fischer's Pan. The country and the surrounding bush and scrub were very dry and as it was still hot there was little about, although we soon found a pair of Spotted Thick-knees resting beneath a spreading acacia and further on several Double-banded Coursers, including a particularly confiding pair with their four fully grown youngsters. Nearby a Scrub Hare lay motionless against the trunk of another tree with a Kalahari Scrub-robin hopping around nearby. By the time we reached Twee Palms we were down to photographing Giraffes and the bank of rain-bearing clouds building up to the south. There really was little about and with the water-hole at Aroe reported to be dry, we decided to retrace our route and spend the remainder of the afternoon at Klein Namutoni. The wildlife was much as yesterday evening, with one or two subtle changes. As we arrived, this morning's Whiskered Tern made a lap of the

water-hole before flying away, and with the other ducks was a single Comb Duck, a species Orlando did not expect to see here. Across the other side, sitting in a large acacia, were the two Tawny Eagles seen on our previous visits.

As we returned to Mushara we enjoyed a last photographic encounter with the diminutive Damara Dik-dik, whilst back at the lodge Cape Turtle Doves and Helmeted Guineafowl were calling 'good night' to one another before dusk settled. Dinner was served outside, but for part of the meal at least the stars were obscured with clouds.

Wednesday, 17 October

Hot and sunny 36+°C

As we loaded the Land Cruiser's trailer after breakfast a male Red-headed Weaver was in the trees around the car park, an unusual bird here and a write-in on the checklist. Two or three hundred metres into the journey and we watched a magnificent Puff Adder, a metre long, slither off the track and into the thick grass



Puff Adder

verge. On again and before we reached the tarmac we saw a new antelope, that looked superficially like a Steenbok, but a little larger with a longer head, a black nose and a completely different gait – it was a Common Duiker.

After days of graded roads and dust in Etosha, it was a pleasure to be driving on tarmac once more. Quite soporific in fact, but for us and not Orlando thank goodness! Pale Chanting Goshawks, Little Swifts and Purple Rollers put in regular appearances on the way. We stopped to look at the flooded sink hole of Lake Otjikoto before by-passing Tsumeb. The lake and its environs had been tidied and spruced up since my last visit several years ago. Then rubbish littered the area including the surface of the lake. As Shelagh was pointing out three Reed Cormorants perched in a tree overhanging the lake Orlando found a partially hidden Black-crowned Night-heron amongst the foliage of trees across the far side of the lake. Shortly afterwards an adult Black-headed Heron flew in to perch in one of the taller bare trees in the same area. The third new bird of the stop was Lesser Striped Swallow, for a pair was flying over the lake with swifts and martins.

Back in the Land Cruiser we continued our long journey southwards passing through Otjiwarongo, stopping by the railway station to let John photograph the old South African Railways 2-8-2 locomotive No 41. Soon we turned off south to the very Germanic town of Omaruru. Beyond the town a gravel road took us to Erongo Wilderness Lodge, a beautiful tented lodge nestling amongst bare granite hills and thorn scrub on the edge of the Erongo Mountains. The tents were well-appointed each with en-suite facilities and a patio with deck chairs making it an ideal place to relax at the end of a tour. Tea and coffee were on the go in the dining area from where an overflowing birdbath attracted Green-winged Pytilia, Cape Bunting and Rock Hyrax.

At 5 p.m. we set-off on a game-drive taking sundowners with us. Soon we had glimpsed a Rockrunner, one of the area's specialities, but it failed to respond to playback unfortunately. Further on we had good views of Pririt Batis, Carp's Tit, Sabota Lark, and later a flock of non-breeding Chestnut Weavers – a new bird for the trip. We drove amongst granitic mountains that turned more and more orange the lower the sun sank. Mammals were limited to Damara Dik-dik, Steenbok, distant Chacma Baboons and a glimpse of a Greater Kudu as it dashed away into the thorn scrub.

We ended up with three really good birds: Hartlaub's Spurfowl was the other local speciality we hoped to see - the lodge's guide found a pair with two well-grown youngsters at quite close range which was a great sighting. When our driver pointed out a Verreaux's Eagle's nest high on a kopi an adult took off and circled around. Finally we added Freckled Nightjar to the list when we arrived at the car park. It's a large nightjar of rocky hills, so Erongo offered the perfect habitat. A quick burst of technology and some of the party saw it flying around two or three times as they returned to their rooms.

Dinner this evening was beneath the stars and an almost new moon hanging upside down against the velvet blackness of the African sky. An excellent meal was helped down with a few glasses of wine to celebrate our excellent safari, courtesy of Ornitholidays. The final checklist followed, and I do hope people took in the millions of stars twinkling as they returned to their rooms, for with so little light pollution it was a magnificent sight.



Swallow-tailed Bee-eater

Thursday, 18 October
Hot and sunny again. 36°C



Erongo

Those birding before breakfast had their share of excitement. A family of Hartlaub's Francolin was shown to some of the party around the back of the reception area, where Rockrunner and a male Short-toed Rock-thrush were also seen. During breakfast birds were coming to water outside the dining room and in the morning light we enjoyed particularly good views of Rosy-faced Lovebirds, Green-winged Pytilia, Great Sparrow, Familiar Chat and Pale-winged Starlings. The only mammal outside the dining room was a Dassie Rat that somehow had lost its tail.



Dusky Sunbird

Sadly we loaded the trailer for the last time and after leaving the mountains behind we reached the tarmac and had an uneventful run south to Windhoek arriving in time for lunch at the Craft Centre, where the last glasses of rock shandy and bottles of Tafal beer refreshed the palate before the meal. Roger joined us once again, having had to come down to the city on business from his home in the north-west of the country. Sadly it meant I had to say goodbye to a party of people that were more friends than clients, for I was staying on with Roger and his family to do non-tour things such as attending school-prizing giving for my grand-daughters.

So it was left to Orlando to see the group safely back to Windhoek Airport, where he helped the party through the check-in formalities. Windhoek Airport lacks the technology of most modern airports. One has to walk across the tarmac to the aircraft and ordinary tractors are used to haul the baggage trolleys. The flight was to Johannesburg with the onward connection to London.

Friday, 19 October

After a smooth flight, the party arrived at London Heathrow early in the morning.

Acknowledgments

Over the years I have been fortunate to do the majority of Ornitholidays' tours to Namibia, but this was surely one of the best. The revised itinerary and a new local ground agent, provided a brilliant tour - not that there had been much wrong with the previous ones! In Orlando we had an excellent guide and driver, and proudly of the Damara people. His birding and natural history knowledge was second to none and he was a mine of information about his unique country, its background and its peoples. Thank you, Orlando, and I can't wait to repeat this splendid tour with you again next year.

Thank you to John and Lynne Tidmarsh for allowing me to use their photos in this report. Finally thank you all for coming, for the great company and your help in various ways throughout the tour and I hope it won't be too long before we meet up on another Ornitholidays to another fascinating destination – there are plenty to choose from in the brochure!

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November 2012



Itinerary and Weather

- 05 October** Overnight flight from Heathrow to Windhoek via Johannesburg.
- 06 October** Late morning arrival at Windhoek. Transfer to guest house.
30°C
- 07 October** Day transfer to Sossus Dune Lodge with picnic lunch at Guisis en route.
Hot and sunny. Overcast late afternoon 32°C
- 08 October** Early morning visit to Sossusvlei and Deadvlei with picnic breakfast. Late afternoon visit to Sesriem Canyon.
Overcast initially, long sunny periods developing. 30°C
- 09 October** Morning transfer through Namib-Naukluft Park to Swakopmund (with picnic lunch at Kuiseb Canyon) via Welwitschia Plains and Moon Landscape.
Hot and sunny, much cooler on coast. Max 34°C
- 10 October** Morning boat trip around Walvis Lagoon with lunch on board. Afternoon birding around southern end of bay and saltworks.
Overcast first during morning with sunny spells. Breezier with sunshine p.m. 16°C.
- 11 October** Morning visit to Swakopmund seafront, Swakopmund Saltworks, lichen fields and Hentiesbaai, before transfer to Damaraland birding en route with lunch at dry Ugab River.
Overcast initially, becoming sunny inland. Up to 30°C
- 12 October** Morning exploration of Aba Huab River in search of Desert Elephant. Picnic lunch. p.m. visit to the bushman engravings at Twyfelfontein, then Burnt Mountain and organ Pipes.
Cloudless, very hot and sunny. 34°C.
- 13 October** Transfer to Etosha via Petrified Forest, Khorixas Water Treatment Works and Outjo (lunch). Etosha National Park. Overnight at Okaukuejo.
Still very hot and sunny. 36°C
- 14 October** Morning game drive to Okondeka, Leeubron and Newbrownii. Lunch at Okaukuejo. Siesta and afternoon game drive to Gemsbokvlakte water-hole via Ombika.
Hot and sunny. 35°C
- 15 October** Transfer to Mushara via water-holes at Newbrownii, Gemsbokvlakte, Olifantsbad, Aus, Homob, Sueda, Charitsaub, Salvadora and Reitfontein in morning. Lunch at Halali. Afternoon continued east visiting Goas, Nuamses, Pan Overlook, Kalkheuwel, Chudob, Fort Namutoni, Klein Namutoni and exit Etosha NP through Von Lindequist Gate.
Very hot and sunny. 38°C
- 16 October** Morning game drive to Andoni Plains via water-holes at Okevi and Tsumcor. Lunch at Mushara. Siesta. p.m. game drive to Fischer's Pan and Klein Namutoni.
Hot and sunny. 40°C at lunchtime.
- 17 October** Morning transfer to Erongo via Lake Otjikoto, Otjiwarongo and Omaruru. Late afternoon game drive in Erongo Mountains.
Hot and sunny 34°C
- 18 October** Morning transfer to Windhoek Airport via Okahandja. Late afternoon flight to Johannesburg and onward connection to London.
Hot and sunny after a cooler night. 38°C
- 19 October** Early morning arrival at London Heathrow.

CHECKLIST OF SPECIES SEEN DURING TOUR

No of days recorded	Locations	Abundance scale
1 2h means seen on 1 day, heard on 2 other days	W = Windhoek area and the highlands to the south N = Namib to Walvis Bay including Sossusvlei and Namib-Naukluft Park S = Skeleton Coast from Walvis Bay north to Hentiesbaai D = Damaraland including Twyfelfontein, Aba Huab River and Khorixas E = Etosha Pan National Park and Lake Otjikoto O = Erongō area > = seen on journey to	1 = <5 seen 2 = 5-9 seen 3 = 10-99 seen 4 = 100-999 5 = 1,000-9,999 6 = 10,000+

BOLD Endemic to southern Africa (south of Zambezi)
(NE) Near-endemic to southern Africa

SPECIES	No of days recorded	Locations					Abundance Scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME	
Common Ostrich	9	W	N	D	E	4	<i>Struthio camelus</i>		
Black-necked Grebe	2			S		3	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>		
Little Grebe	6	W		S	D	E	3	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	
White-chinned Petrel	1			S		2	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>		
Sooty Shearwater	1			S		2	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>		
Great White Pelican	2			S		3	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>		
Cape Gannet	3			S		3	<i>Morus capensis</i>		
White-breasted Cormorant ¹	3	W		S		3	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>		
Cape Cormorant	2			S		6	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>		
Bank Cormorant	1			S		1	<i>Phalacrocorax neglectus</i>		
Reed Cormorant ²	2	W				E	2	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	
Crowned Cormorant	1			S		1	<i>Phalacrocorax coronatus</i>		
Grey Heron	8	W		S	D	E	2	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	
Black-headed Heron	1					E	1	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	
Little Egret	3			S	D		1	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	
Cattle Egret	1					E	3	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1					E	1	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	
Hamerkop	1	W					1	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	
Greater Flamingo	4			S	D		6	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	
Lesser Flamingo	2			S			4	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>	
Egyptian Goose	5	W			D	E	3	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	
South African Shelduck	4	W		S	D	E	3	<i>Tadorna cana</i>	
Cape Teal	7	W	N	S		E	4	<i>Anas capensis</i>	
Red-billed Teal	4	W			D	E	4	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	
Cape Shoveler	3	W				E	2	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	
Maccoa Duck	1	W					3	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>	
Secretarybird	4	W	N		D	E	1	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	
White-backed Vulture	7	W	N		D	E	1	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	
Lappet-faced Vulture	8	W	N		D	E	2	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	
Black-shouldered Kite	7	W	N		D	E	O	2	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Yellow-billed Kite	1	W					1	<i>Milvus parasitus</i>	
Verreaux's Eagle	3	W	N		D		O	1	<i>Aquila verreauxii</i>
Tawny Eagle	6					E	O	1	<i>Aquila rapax</i>
Booted Eagle	3		N			E		1	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
African Hawk-Eagle	1				D		O>	1	<i>Hieraaetus spilogaster</i>
Martial Eagle	2				D	E		1	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>
Black-chested Snake-Eagle	5		N		D	E		1	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>
Bateleur	2					E		1	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>
Jackal Buzzard	1		N					1	<i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>
Gabar Goshawk	1				D			1	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>
Pale Chanting Goshawk (NE)	10	W	N		D	E	O	3	<i>Melierax canorus</i>

Lanner Falcon	2		N				1	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Rock Kestrel	10		N	D	E	O	2	<i>Falco rupicola</i>
Greater Kestrel	7		N	D	E		2	<i>Falco rupicoloides</i>
Pygmy Falcon	2		N		E		1	<i>Polihierax semitorquatus</i>
Crested Francolin	1				E		1	<i>Peliperdix sephaena</i>
Red-billed Spurfowl (NE)	5			D	E		3	<i>Pternistis adspersus</i>
Hartlaub's Spurfowl (NE)	2					O	2	<i>Pternistis hartlaubi</i>
Swainson's Spurfowl	2	W			E		1	<i>Pternistis swainsonii</i>
Helmeted Guineafowl	5				E	O	4	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Common Moorhen	3	W		D	E		2	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Red-knobbed Coot ³	4	W	S	D	E		3	<i>Fulica cristata</i>
Kori Bustard	5				E		2	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>
Ludwig's Bustard (NE)	2		N	D			1	<i>Neotis ludwigii</i>
Rüppell's Korhaan (NE)	6		N	D			3	<i>Eupodotis rueppellii</i>
Red-crested Korhaan	5				E	O	1	<i>Eupodotis ruficrista</i>
Northern Black Korhaan	5			D	E		2	<i>Eupodotis afraoides</i>
African Jacana	1				E		1	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>
African Black Oystercatcher	2			S			3	<i>Haematopus moquini</i>
Common Ringed Plover	2			S			3	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
White-fronted Plover	2			S			3	<i>Charadrius marginatus</i>
Chestnut-banded Plover	3			S	E		4	<i>Charadrius pallidus</i>
Kittlitz's Plover	2	W			E		1	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>
Three-banded Plover	6	W	S	D	E		3	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>
Grey Plover	2		S				3	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Crowned Lapwing	3				E		3	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
Blacksmith Lapwing	5	W		D	E		2	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	2		S				3	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Wood Sandpiper	4		N	D			2	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	1		S				3	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Common Greenshank	2		S				3	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Common Sandpiper	5		S	D	E		1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Curlew Sandpiper	6		N	S	D	E	5	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Little Stint	8	W	N	S	D	E	5	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Sanderling	2		S				4	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Ruff	8	W	N	S	D	E	3	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
Common Whimbrel	1		S				1	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Red-necked Phalarope	1		S				3	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>
Pied Avocet	5	W	N	S			4	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Black-winged Stilt	5	W	S	D			3	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Spotted Thick-knee	2	2h			E		1	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>
Burchell's Courser (NE)	2		N		E		3	<i>Cursorius rufus</i>
Temminck's Courser	2				E		3	<i>Cursorius temminckii</i>
Double-banded Courser	4		N	D	E		3	<i>Smutornis africanus</i>
Pomarine Jaeger	1		S				1	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>
Subantarctic Skua	1		S				1	<i>Stercorarius antarctica</i>
Kelp Gull	2		S				3	<i>Larus dominicus</i>
Grey-headed Gull	1		S				1	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>
Hartlaub's Gull	3		S				4	<i>Larus hartlaubii</i>
Caspian Tern	1		S				3	<i>Sterna caspia</i>
Swift Tern ⁴	2		S				5	<i>Sterna bergii</i>
Sandwich Tern	1		S				3	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>
Common Tern	1		S				4	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Arctic Tern	1		S				3	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>
Damara Tern (NE)	1		S				1	<i>Sterna balaenarum</i>
Whiskered Tern	1				E		1	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Namaqua Sandgrouse (NE)	7	W	N	D	E		3	<i>Pterocles namaqua</i>
Double-banded Sandgrouse (NE)	2				E		4	<i>Pterocles bicinctus</i>

Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	4	W		S				3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Speckled Pigeon	7	W	N		D			3	<i>Columba guinea</i>
Cape Turtle-Dove	10		N		D	E	O	4	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Laughing Dove	13	W	N	S	D	E	O	4	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
Namaqua Dove	9	W	N		D	E	O	3	<i>Oena capensis</i>
Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove	3					E		2	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>
Rüppell's Parrot (NE)	2				D			1	<i>Poicephalus rueppellii</i>
Rosy-faced Lovebird (NE)	3				D		O	3	<i>Agapornis roseicollis</i>
Grey Go-away-bird	3	W			D	E	O	3	<i>Corythaixoides concolor</i>
African Cuckoo	1					E		1	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>
African Scops-Owl	1					E		1	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>
Pearl-spotted Owllet	1	3h			D	E		1	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>
Spotted Eagle-Owl	-	3h	N					1	<i>Bubo africanus</i>
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl	1					E		1	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>
Rufous-cheeked Nightjar	2					E		1	<i>Caprimulgus rufigena</i>
Freckled Nightjar	1						O	1	<i>Caprimulgus tristigma</i>
African Black Swift	1		N					1	<i>Apus barbatus</i>
Bradfield's Swift (NE)	2	W	N					3	<i>Apus bradfieldi</i>
Little Swift	7	W			D	E	O	3	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Alpine Swift	2	W			D			3	<i>Apus melba</i>
African Palm Swift	8	W			D	E	O>	3	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
White-backed Mousebird (NE)	5	W			D			2	<i>Colius colius</i>
European Bee-eater	4					E		3	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	5	W	N			E	O	2	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>
Lilac-breasted Roller	4	W			D	E		1	<i>Coracias caudatus</i>
Purple Roller	7	W			D	E	O	2	<i>Coracias naevius</i>
African Hoopoe	1					E		1	<i>Upupa africana</i>
Common Scimitar-bill	2				D	E		1	<i>Rhinopomastus cyanomelas</i>
African Grey Hornbill	11	W	N		D	E	O	3	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>
Southern Red-billed Hornbill	4					E		2	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>
Damara Hornbill ⁵ (NE)	1				D			1	<i>Tockus damarensis</i>
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	7				D	E	O	3	<i>Tockus leucomelas</i>
Monteiro's Hornbill	3	W					O	2	<i>Tockus monteiri</i>
Acacia Pied Barbet (NE)	3	W			D	E		1	<i>Tricholaema leucomelas</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker	3	W	N			E		1	<i>Dendropicops fuscescens</i>
Rufous-naped Lark	1					E		1	<i>Mirafra africana</i>
Sabota Lark (NE)	8		N		D	E		3	<i>Mirafra sabota</i>
Benguela Long-billed Lark ⁶ (NE)	2				D			1	<i>Certhilauda benguelensis</i>
Dune Lark	1		N					1	<i>Certhilauda erythrochlamys</i>
Spike-heeled Lark	2					E		3	<i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>
Red-capped Lark	5		N			E		4	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>
Pink-billed Lark (NE)	1							2	<i>Spizocorys conirostris</i>
Stark's Lark (NE)	2		N			E		1	<i>Spizocorys starki</i>
Gray's Lark (NE)	1		N					1	<i>Ammomanes grayi</i>
Chestnut-backed Sparrow-lark	2					E		1	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>
Grey-backed Sparrow-lark (NE)	5		N		D	E		5	<i>Eremopterix verticalis</i>
Barn Swallow	1					E		1	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Red-breasted Swallow	4					E		2	<i>Cecropis semirufa</i>
Lesser Striped Swallow	1					E		1	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>
Greater Striped Swallow (NE)	1	W						3	<i>Cecropis cucullata</i>
South African Cliff Swallow	2			S		E		1	<i>Petrochelidon spilodera</i>
Rock Martin	11	W	N		D	E	O	3	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	12	W	N		D	E	O	4	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Cape Crow	8		N		D	E		3	<i>Corvus capensis</i>
Pied Crow	10		N		D	E	O	3	<i>Corvus albus</i>
Carp's Tit (NE)	3				D		O	2	<i>Parus carpi</i>
Southern Pied Babbler	1					E		3	<i>Turdoides bicolor</i>

Bare-cheeked Babbler (NE)	1				D			3	<i>Turdoides gymnogenys</i>
African Red-eyed Bulbul (NE)	12	W	N		D	E	O	3	<i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>
Groundscraper Thrush	3				D	E		2	<i>Psophocichla litsipsirupa</i>
Short-toed Rock-Thrush (NE)	3	W	N				O	1	<i>Monticola brevipes</i>
Mountain Wheatear (NE)	6	W	N		D			3	<i>Oenanthe monticola</i>
Capped Wheatear	2					E	O	1	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>
Familiar Chat	4	W	N				O	1	<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>
Tractrac Chat (NE)	1		N					1	<i>Cercomela tractrac</i>
Karoo Chat (NE)	1		N					1	<i>Cercomela schlegelii</i>
Ant-eating Chat	1					E		3	<i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>
White-browed Scrub-Robin	-	1h				E		1	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>
Kalahari Scrub-Robin (NE)	4	W				E	O	1	<i>Cercotrichas paena</i>
Herero Chat (NE)	1				D			1	<i>Namibornis herero</i>
Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler (NE)	6	W			D	E	O	1	<i>Parisoma subcaeruleum</i>
Long-billed Crombec	2				D	E		1	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>
Grey-backed Camaroptera ⁷	3				D	E		1	<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i>
Rockrunner (NE)	2						O	1	<i>Achaetops pycnopygius</i>
Desert Cisticola	10		N		D	E	O	3	<i>Cisticola aridulus</i>
Rattling Cisticola	1					E		1	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
Black-chested Prinia (NE)	8		N		D	E		2	<i>Prinia flavicans</i>
Rufous-eared Warbler	1		N					1	<i>Malcorus pectoralis</i>
Marico Flycatcher (NE)	4					E		3	<i>Melaenornis mariquensis</i>
Chat Flycatcher	8	W	N		D	E	O	3	<i>Melaenornis infuscatus</i>
Pirit Batis (NE)	3					E		1	<i>Batis Pirit</i>
Cape Wagtail	5	W		S				1	<i>Motacilla capensis</i>
African Pipit	4				D	E		3	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Common Fiscal	8	W	N		D	E		3	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Crimson-breasted Shrike (NE)	3				D	E		1	<i>Laniarius atrococcineus</i>
Magpie Shrike	1					E		1	<i>Corvinella melanoleuca</i>
Black-backed Puffback	1					E		1	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>
Brubru	1					E		1	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Brown-crowned Tchagra	4				D	E		1	<i>Tchagra australis</i>
Bokmakierie (NE)	2	W			D			1	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>
White-tailed Shrike (NE)	3				D		O	3	<i>Lanioturdus torquatus</i>
White-crested Helmet-Shrike	2					E		3	<i>Prionops plumatus</i>
Southern White-crowned Shrike	5				D	E	O	2	<i>Eurocephalus anguitimens</i>
Wattled Starling	3	W			D			2	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
Burchell's Starling (NE)	6	W				E		3	<i>Lamprotornis australis</i>
Cape Glossy Starling	9	W	N	S	D	E	O	3	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>
Pale-winged Starling (NE)	9	W	N		D		O	4	<i>Onychognathus nabouroup</i>
Marico Sunbird	2	W				E		1	<i>Nectarinia mariquensis</i>
White-bellied Sunbird	1					E		1	<i>Nectarinia talatala</i>
Dusky Sunbird (NE)	8	1h	W	N	D	E	O	1	<i>Nectarinia fusca</i>
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	1	W						1	<i>Nectarinia senegalensis</i>
Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver	2					E		1	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	9	W			D	E	O	3	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>
Sociable Weaver	6	W	N		D	E		4	<i>Philetairus socius</i>
House Sparrow	4	W	N	S				3	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Great Sparrow (NE)	5		N			E	O	3	<i>Passer motitensis</i>
Cape Sparrow (NE)	4		N	S	D			3	<i>Passer melanurus</i>
Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	9		N		D	E	O	3	<i>Passer diffusus</i>
Scaly-feathered Finch (NE)	6	W	N		D	E		3	<i>Sporopipes squamifrons</i>
Chestnut Weaver	1	1h				E		4	<i>Ploceus rubiginosus</i>
Southern Masked-Weaver	8	W	N		D	E	O	3	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>
Red-headed Weaver	1					E		1	<i>Anaplectes melanotis</i>
Red-billed Quelea	2					E		4	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Green-winged Pytilia	2						O	1	<i>Pytilia melba</i>

Violet-eared Waxbill (NE)	4			E	O	3	<i>Granatina granatina</i>	
Common Waxbill	1			E		1	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	
Black-faced Waxbill	1			E		3	<i>Estrilda erythronotos</i>	
Red-headed Finch (NE)	5	N		E	O	3	<i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>	
Pin-tailed Whydah	1			E		1	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	
Black-throated Canary	6	W		D	E	O	3	<i>Serinus atrogularis</i>
Yellow Canary (NE)	4	N		D	E	O	1	<i>Serinus flaviventris</i>
Golden-breasted Bunting	2			E		1	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>	
Cape Bunting (NE)	3			D		O	1	<i>Emberiza capensis</i>
Lark-like Bunting (NE)	1	N		D		1	<i>Emberiza impetuani</i>	

Name Changes and Taxonomic Notes Southern African bird names have undergone a major revision recently as per the recently published Robert's Birds of Southern Africa (7th edition)

- 1 White-breasted Cormorant was formerly treated as a race of Great Cormorant *P. carbo*
- 2 Reed Cormorant is also known as Long-tailed Cormorant elsewhere in Africa
- 3 Red-knobbed Coot is the Crested Coot of Western Palearctic.
- 4 Swift Tern is also known as Crested Tern elsewhere
- 5 Damara Hornbill is split from Southern Red-billed Hornbill
- 6 With splitting of Long-billed Lark, Benguela and Karoo races are now species in their own right.
- 7 Bleating Warbler split into two species and renamed Grey-backed and Green-backed Camaropteras

MAMMALS

Baboon, Chacma	6	W		D		O	3	<i>Papio ursinus</i>
Bat, Mauritian Tomb	1			D			1	<i>Taphozous mauritianus</i>
Cat, African Wild	1				E		1	<i>Felis lybica</i>
Dik-Dik, Damara	4				E	O	3	<i>Madoqua kirkii</i>
Dolphin, Bottle-nosed	1		S				2	<i>Turisops truncates</i>
Dolphin, Heaviside's	1		S				2	<i>Cephalorhynchus heavisidii</i>
Duiker, Common	1				E		1	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>
Elephant, African	5			D	E		3	<i>Loxodonta Africana</i>
Giraffe	5	N			E		3	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>
Hare, Scrub	1				E		1	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>
Hartebeest, Red	1				E		3	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus</i>
Hyena, Spotted	2				E		1	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>
Hyrax, Rock (Dassie)	4	N		D		O	3	<i>Procavia capensis</i>
Impala, Black-faced	4				E		4	<i>Aepyceros melampus petersi</i>
Jackal, Black-backed	8	N	S		E		3	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>
Kudu, Greater	6				E	O	3	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>
Leopard	1				E		1	<i>Panthera pardus</i>
Lion	2				E		2	<i>Panthera leo</i>
Mongoose, Banded	2				E		3	<i>Mungos mungo</i>
Mongoose, Slender	2				E		1	<i>Galerella sanguinea</i>
Mongoose, Yellow	2				E		1	<i>Cynictis penicillata</i>
Mouse, Striped	1	N					1	<i>Rhabdomys pumilio</i>
Oryx (Gemsbok)	10	N		D	E	O	4	<i>Oryx gazelle</i>
Rat, Dassie	2	N				O	1	<i>Petromys typicus</i>
Rhinoceros, Black	2				E		2	<i>Diceros bicornis</i>
Seal, Cape Fur	2		S				5	<i>Arctocephalus pusillus</i>
Springbok	10	N	S	D	E		4	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>
Squirrel, Ground	5	N		D	E		3	<i>Xerus inauris</i>
Squirrel, Tree	3				E		1	<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>
Steenbok	8	N		D	E	O	2	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>
Warthog	4				E	O	3	<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>
Wildebeest, Blue	5	N			E		3	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>
Zebra, Burchell's	4				E		4	<i>Equus burchelli</i>
Zebra, Hartmann's Mountain	2	N					3	<i>Equus zebra hartmannae</i>

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Adder, Puff	<i>Bitis arietans</i>	Lizard, Shovel-snouted	<i>Meroles suborbitalis</i>
Agama, Ground	<i>Agama aculeate</i>	Skink, Striped	<i>Mabuya striata</i>
Agama, Namibian Rock	<i>Agama planiceps</i>	Skink, Kalahari	<i>Trachylepsis spilogaster</i>
Frog, Marbled Rubber	<i>Phrynomantis annectens</i>	Terrapin, Marsh	<i>Pelomedusa subrufa</i>

Butterflies identified included African Monarch, Brown-veined White and Citrus Swallowtail.

These lists represent those birds and other animals seen by party members of this tour.

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Front cover: African Elephants at waterhole Etosha National Park

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