



*Southern White-faced Owl gave wonderful views. What a special owl! (JM)*

## **NAMIBIA & THE OKAVANGO**

**23 SEPTEMBER – 8 OCTOBER 2019**

**LEADERS:** STEVE BRAINE and JULIEN MAZENAUER

The 2019 Birdquest tour to Namibia & The Okavango continued on a long run of successful trips, despite the extreme drought Southern Africa is experiencing at the moment, resulting in the lack of many usually common migrants like Cuckoos and Warblers. Anyway, we managed to get good views at all the endemics and possible near-endemics of the area. We manage to record 379 species, a good tally given the severe drought. The first day at Windhoek produced many of our first near-endemics like Bradfield's Swift, Short-toed Rock Thrushes, Violet-eared Waxbills, Rosy-faced Lovebirds, South African Shelducks and many more. Moving on the Spreetshoogte, we gained great views of the sought-after Herero Chat, followed by Layard's Warbler and Verreaux's Eagle. The Namib specials were on the show, with repeated sightings of Rüppell's Korhaans, Gray's and Stark's Larks, Red-headed Finches. Dune Lark showed exceptionally well near Rostock Ritz, and our stay at Walvis Bay was highlighted by thousands of waders including 1500 Chestnut-banded Plovers, hundreds of White-fronted Plovers, 15 Damara Terns, a surprising African Penguin and a

Northern Giant Petrel as write-in. Huab Lodge delighted us with its Rockrunners, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, White-tailed Shrike, and amazing sighting of Southern White-faced Owl, African Scops Owl, Freckled Nightjar few feet away and our first White-tailed Shrikes and Violet Wood Hoopoes. Etosha was our next destination, where we were amazed by the diversity of big mammals. Leopard, Cheetah, Lion, Honey Badger, White and Black Rhino all gave great views, as well as an excellent set of birds, including Pink-billed and Eastern Clapper Larks, Burchell's Namaqua and Double-banded Sandgrouses, Blue Cranes, Ludwig's and the huge Kori Bustard, Northern Black and Red-crested Korhaans, Double-banded and Burchell's Courser as well as the range-restricted Black-faced Babbler. We then spent some nights along the Okavango river, where Bat Hawk, Pel's Fishing Owl, the magnificent Southern Carmine Bee-eater (bird of the trip for most!), the near-endemic Slaty Egret and an array of other great birds delighted us, while some woodland birding produced a pair of the rare Souza's Shrike, Rufous-bellied Tit and Fawn-coloured Lark. A night near Rundu gave us great looks at Marsh Owl and Square-tailed Nightjar. Our final destination was the ultimate Erongo Wilderness Lodge, where everybody finally connected with Hartlaub's Spurfowl. All-in-all, a successful tour full of great birds and mammals!



*Southern Carmine Bee-eater and Pel's Fishing Owl were two major highlights along the Okavango(JM)*

The group assembled at the River Crossing Lodge near Windhoek the day prior the start of the tour. Our first breakfast was interrupted by a showy male Short-toed Rock Thrush and some Rosy-faced Lovebirds occupying Little Swift Nests. We birded the productive grounds of the hotel at first light, finding some Great Sparrows, Cape Buntings, Barred Wren-Warbler, Chestnut-vented Warblers, Cardinal Woodpecker, Acacia Pied Barbets and numerous Southern Masked Weavers, Pale-winged Starlings, Scarlet-chested Sunbird and an immature African Hawk-Eagle. We were soon off to the nearby Avis dam, who was found to be totally dry. Walking along the shores of what used to be a reservoir, we did see a vast array of interesting species. Our first near-endemic Monteiro's and Damara Red-billed Hornbills, Violet-eared, Blue and Black-faced Waxbills, Nicholson's (recently split from Long-billed) and African (or Grassland) Pipits, a very cooperative Black-chested Snake Eagle, a displaying Gabar Goshawk pair, Greater Striped and Pearl-breasted Swallows,

Brubru, our first Southern Grey-headed Sparrows, African Hoopoes, several parties of Marico Flycatcher, Marico Sunbirds, a large flock of Scaly-feathered Finch and a lone Sabota Lark. Back at the lodge for lunch, Swifts were much in evidence, with nice views of near-endemic Bradfield's and Alpine, African Palm, Little and White-rumped Swifts! Two Lappet-faced Vultures and an adult Verreaux's Eagle made distant appearances, while Rock Kestrels hovered close to our chalets. The afternoon was spent at Gammams Sewage Works, where we encountered a large number of new species. On the ponds, South African Shelducks, Red-billed, Hottentot and Cape Teals were numerous, as were African Darters, Reed Cormorant, Common Moorhens, Red-knobbed Coots, Blacksmith Lapwing and Three-banded Plovers. The reedbeds were packed with African Reed and Lesser Swamp Warblers, two Black Crakes showed nicely, and a Little Bittern perched briefly. Hundreds (probably thousands) of Wattled Starlings, including some in full breeding plumage, were attending the sewage works, and we encountered what was for Steve the biggest group of Monteiro's Hornbills he ever saw, including over one hundred birds, attracted by the rubbish! Rattling Cisticolas rattled in bushes, some migrant waders like Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Ruff and Wood Sandpipers waded along the shores, an African Fish Eagle perched close, White-backed Mousebirds flittered around and White-throated and Pearl-breasted Swallows perched numerously on wires. On the way back to the lodge, a short stop didn't produce the hoped-for Bat Hawk, but we did see a small breeding colony of Chestnut Weavers, a great way to end the first day, with over 100 species recorded.



*The unobtrusive Herero Chat is a major target and was found easily on this tour (JM)*

Following morning saw us leaving soon after breakfast towards Namibgrens. On the way, we encountered our first Chat Flycatchers, Cape Sparrows, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, a party of Common Scimitar-bills, some Ashy Tits, Red-breasted and Greater Striped Swallows, a nice African Hawk-Eagle pair, a Namaqua Sandgrouse pair by the roadside and best of all a showy Ludwig's Bustard, far from its usual range nearer the coast. Raptors were in evidence, with numerous Pale Chanting Goshawks, some Lappet-faced and several White-backed Vultures and a lone Tawny Eagle. Sociable Weavers nest soon appeared, and an active nest had dozens of these nice little finches. We arrived at the Spreetshoogte pass early enough for some initial exploration, leading within an hour to the discovery of a fantastic Herero Chat, much to the group's delight! Cape Sparrows were common, as were Mountain Wheatears. We retreated during the heat of the day to our accommodation and went out again later. The extreme drought didn't help locating

anything, we tried hard to find a Rockrunner but to no avail. An excellent pair of Verreaux's Eagle flew overhead, and we did see some Karoo Scrub Robins, White-faced Mousebirds, Pirit Batis, Cape Buntings and Great Sparrows before calling it a day.



*Dune Lark, Namibia's sole endemic, showed down to a few meters! (JM)*

We spent most of the following day travelling through the Namib desert from Namibgrens to Walvis Bay. An early stop near our accommodation produced a cooperative Layard's Warbler but nothing of note was recorded before a refill stop near Solitaire, where we logged two more Ludwig's Bustards. There, a waterhole was attracting dozens of Red-headed Finches, Sociable Weavers, Namaqua Dove, as well as Cape and Pied Crows. On our way to lunch, a small flock of Stark's Lark was seen feeding by the roadside, and a short walk inside a dune complex gave us the chance of finding a pair of confinding Dune Lark, Namibia's sole true endemic. The birds showed very well, down to 3 meters, allowing a great photography opportunity! A Chat Flycatcher and some Karoo Chats were also seen nearby. After lunch at Rostock Ritz, we drove slowly towards Walvis Bay, stopping regularly to seek some of the Namib desert endemics. First on was a pair of Rüppell's Korhaan, sheltering from the sun under a low escarpment. And second were two Gray's Lark showing very close and at length on some of the most desartic plains we encountered. Delighted with these great birds, we drove down to Walvis Bay, where we saw our first Red-faced Mousebirds and had an extraordinary dinner with some of the world's best calamaris.

The following day was mostly devoted to waders and seabirds, and after an early breakfast we were on our way to the seafront. First views of the bay from our hotel granted us a few African (Black) Oystercatchers, Crowned, Cape Cormorants and numerous Hartlaub's Gulls. Further on, the main targets appeared swiftly, with large number of Chestnut-banded Plovers on the runway (joined by fewer White-fronted Plovers) and Damara Terns promptly found at their usual stake-out, with up to 15 birds hunting over the lagoons. Waders were plentiful, with big numbers of Pied Avocets, Black-winged Stilts, Curlew Sandpipers and Little Stint, dozens of Greenshanks, Marsh Sandpipers, Whimbrels, Ruffs, Grey Plovers, Common Ringed Plovers, Bar-tailed Godwits, Ruddy Turnstones and Sanderlings. Thousands of Lesser and Greater Flamingos were on show close to the tarmac. Reaching the sea, we soon discovered that something was going on, as one of the first birds seen was a huge Northern Giant Petrel, flying south close to the shore! Dozens of Sooty

Shearwaters were joined by fewer White-chinned Petrels, many Cape Gannets, Cape Cormorants, a Parasitic Jaeger and several Wilson's Storm Petrels (all seen well from the shore!) but best was one adult African Penguin, seen diving repeatedly not far from the coast! After these emotions we drove back to Walvis Bay, where we saw our first African Grey Hornbill, a few nice Orange River White-eyes and some out-of-range Red-billed Quelea, probably forced on the coast by the severe drought. A quick lunch, and we were out again, visiting this time the nearby bird sanctuary. New birds for us included Cape Shovelers, Maccua Ducks (at last!), some nice Kittlitz's Plovers and Brown-throated Martins. Lesser Flamingos were in the thousands, joined by some monster Great White Pelicans. We then drove again to the bay and enjoyed a spectacle of thousands of Chestnut-banded Plovers together sheltering from the wind, as well as more migrant waders and a single Grey-headed Gull. We called it a day and had yet another fabulous dinner at the Anchors.



*Damara Terns were just back from their wintering grounds (left) and a splendid Chestnut-banded Plover (JM)*

Next morning saw us departing early and after refilling at Swakopmund we were on our way to Huab Lodge. But several targets had to be found in the Namib, and we soon encountered our first Tractrac Chat, of the very pale Namib desert race. We stopped later on more rocky terrain and after a long walk managed to find a nice Benguela Long-billed Lark, just as we were about to give up. It showed nicely for some but then disappeared, only to be found again an hour later! Further, we located a Rüppell's Korhaan pair sheltering under a bush and giving great views, as well as about 30 Double-banded Sandgrouses (sheltering under the same bush!). We then drove to Khorixas, where we had lunch, and found at last our first White-tailed Shrikes, joining a party of White-crested Helmetshrikes. The hotel's ground were birdy, with a couple of Green-winged Pytilias, half a dozen near-endemic Bare-cheeked Babblers, some Carp's Tits, our first Pearl-spotted Owllet and some migrant Willow Warblers. Before arriving at Huab, Red-crested Korhaans were found along the road and some White-throated Canaries, Augur Buzzard, White-backed Vultures and Acacia Pied Barbets. We checked-in at Huab, and waited for dusk by the ponds. Very soon, a Southern White-faced Owl started calling (before dusk!) and came in quickly, giving incredible views! The same bird performed brilliantly again before dinner and was joined by an African Scops Owl and two Freckled Nightjars, all giving walk-away views. A great end of the day!

The next day started with a great breakfast, before we drove down the Huab river bed. Small pools attracted White-throated and Black-throated Canaries, a nice adult Black Stork, some Three-banded Plovers, Wood and Common Sandpipers. A bit further, we soon found a Rockrunner pair calling and hopping inconspicuously from rock to rock but allowing great views and scope studies, at last, after having tried at several usually reliable locations! With this in the bag, we made our way back to the lodge and drove up river, finding several Rüppell's Parrots, Carp's Tits and commoner birds. A short wait by a waterhole

produced hundreds of Red-headed Finches, a lone Lark-like Bunting, White-throated Canaries and a few Red-billed Queleas. After a lunch back at the lodge and a well deserved siesta, we were off again up river looking for some more target birds. We tried to call in Hartlaub's Spurfowl at several places, to no avail. We then walked up a small hill, played again, but nothing responded. As I walked a bit higher, I flushed a young male Hartlaub's Spurfowl, which landed out of view behind some large boulders! A bit of careful scanning and we spotted it sitting at the base of a large rock, giving scope views for some before it moved on again. At least most of the group got reasonable views of this most-wanted species! The drive back to the lodge didn't produce anything new, but a Pearl-spotted Owlet, some more Rüppell's Parrots and the other usual suspects.



*The Namib endemic Rüppell's Korhaan (above) and the striking near-endemic White-tailed Shrike (JM)*

Before driving to Etosha next morning, we still had a mission to accomplish at Huab. We set off early up river, and soon found our last target for the area, Violet Wood Hoopoe! A few White-tailed Shrikes and Carp's Tit were also present. We then departed towards Etosha, where we arrived early afternoon, still on time for some initial exploration of the national park. As soon as we entered it, a monstrous Black Rhinoceros showed by the roadside. Not a bad start! We travelled beyond Okaukuejo oujo, where we observed hundreds of larks, mostly Spike-heeled and Red-capped (dozens of both species), but also some small flocks of inconspicuous Pink-billed Larks, one Eastern Clapper Lark, and large flocks of Chestnut-backed and Grey-backed Sparrow-Larks. The plains around hosted a few Ludwig's and many Kori Bustard and Northern Black Korhaan, a single lost Greater Flamingo, Double-banded and Namaqua Sandgrouses and numerous Double-banded Coursers. 4 lions (including a huge male) were resting in the shade and allowed close views, Black-backed Jackals wandered around and groups of African Elephants and Giraffes were seen at close quarters. Two smart Rufous-eared Warblers were finally called in before we retreated to Etosha Village for the night.



*Freckled Nightjar was seen exceedingly well at Huab (JM)*

Entering Etosha National Park early next morning brought us to a intimate encounter with an impressive male Lion, who kept walking past our car only 2 meters away! A very, very impressive sight. Leaving Okaukuejo, large flocks of Chestnut-backed and Grey-backed Sparrow-Larks dotted the grey plains, along with more Red-capped, Spike-heeled and Sabota Larks and Double-banded Coursers. A Red-necked Falcon pair was seen at close quarters, as well as an adult Lanner and a huge Martial Eagle sitting on its nest. Then, one of the most wanted African mammals put on a great show, with 2 magnificent Honey Badgers delighting us by hunting and digging together, for about 10 minutes not far away at all from our vehicle. And just after, a White Rhinoceros appeared distantly (introduced species in the park) as well as 7 Black Rhinoceroses. A pride of 8 Lion with 3 four months-old cubs also crossed the road very close, with a particularly inquisitive young male wanting to taste our tires! Kori Bustards and Northern Black Korhaan were numerous, and we ended up having an early lunch at Halali after a very productive morning, but not before seeing one more Red-necked Falcon pair. Burchell's Starlings were common on the lawn, with Damara Red-billed, Monteiro's, Southern Yellow-billed and African Grey Hornbills all tame garden birds. Two Violet Wood Hoopoes also made an appearance near the restaurant. An early afternoon drive was quite uneventful, so

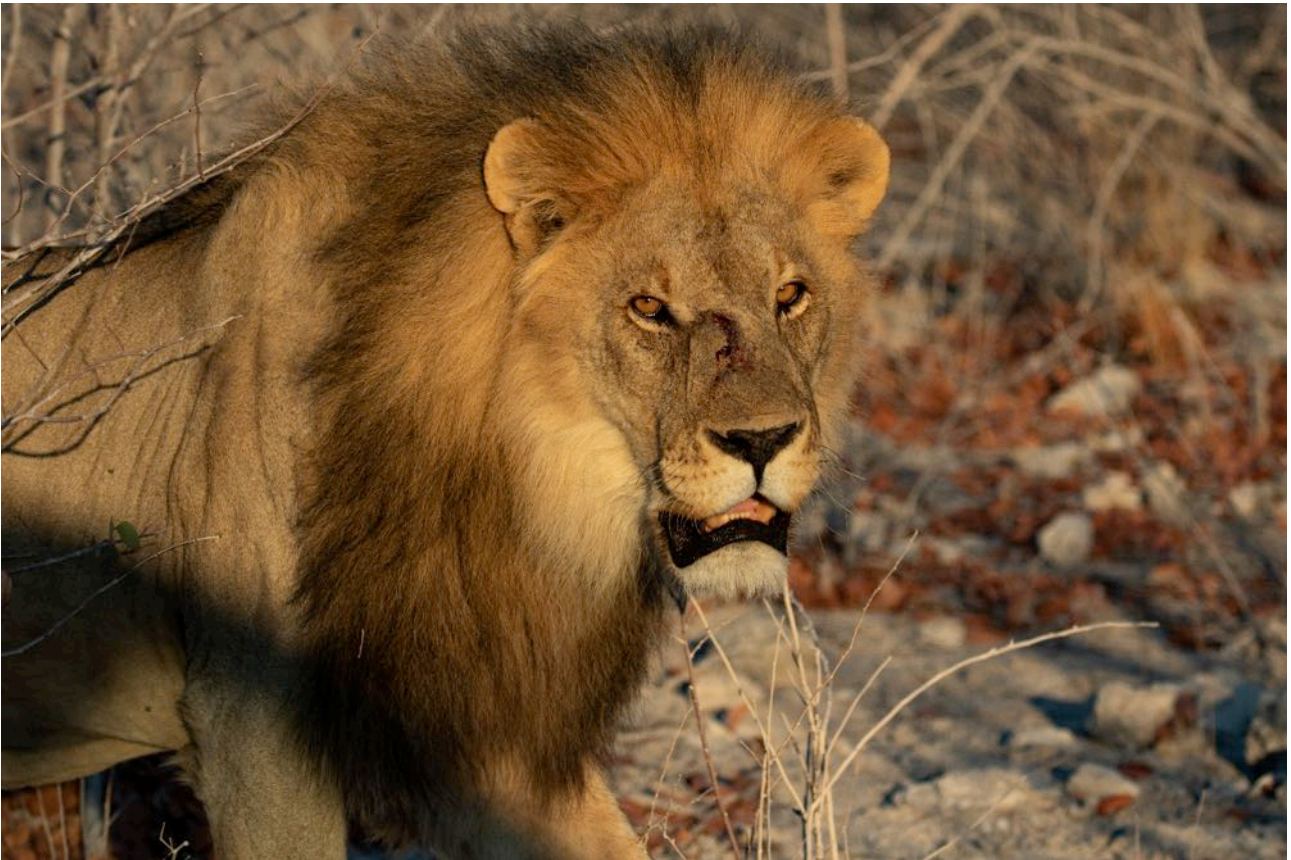
we refuelled and drove to our next accommodation, doing some stops at waterholes. A Bateleur was nice, as was a monster Lappet-faced Vulture, a herd of Elephants and some commoner birds and mammals. After checking in at Mokuti, a walk on the grounds of our lodge was quite productive, with our first White-browed Scrub Robin, Red-billed Buffalo Weavers, Black-backed Puffback, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, White-bellied and Dusky Sunbirds, Yellow-breasted Apalis, a few Black-faced Waxbills but by far the best were two near-endemic Black-faced Babblers, seen close above us as they were heading to their roost.



*Northern Black Korhaans and Double-banded Coursers are numerous in Etosha but these ones showed especially well ! (JM)*



Next day started with a bang as we drove around Fischer's pan in Etosha, with an excellent sighting of a Cheetah! The animal was first seen laying down, but soon moved and came within a few meters from us, giving us chance to admire its perfection and athletic body.



*Lions were seen a few times (this one was particularly impressive!) but we only saw Cheetah on one lucky encounter (JM)*

We then drove to a waterhole, where hundreds of Namaqua Sandgrouse came to drink, followed a bit latter by about a hundred of the sought-after Burchell's Sandgrouse! A group of 84 Elands antelope was also sighted (a record for our driver and for Steve!), and a mating pair of Lion was admired at length. The drive to the Andoni plain was uneventful, but when we arrived on site we soon found 4 elegant Blue Crane, feeding between hundreds of Plains Zebras and Blue Wildebeest. Double-banded Coursers, Pink-billed Larks, Chestnut-banded Plover and a lone White-headed Vulture were also sighted nearby. Just out of the national park, we soon got great looks at the near-endemic Burchell's Courser, before driving back to Namutoni for lunch. The afternoon was spent driving along various tracks, and we were delighted to find a Leopard resting in the shade, which was then seen walking off and starting to hunt in the bush, quite an experience! Some more Lions were also seen, as well as 15 African Elephants having a bath few meters in front of us, joined by a few Giraffes. Birds seen included some nice Bateleurs, a huge Martial Eagle eating a Kirk's Dik-dik, our first Golden-breasted Buntings, some Black Crakes and commoner birds.



*The sought-after Honey Badger, a huge Black Rhino and a superb male Burchell's Sandgrouse from Etosha (JM)*

Having arranged box lunches the evening before, we drove early out of Mokuti to our next destination, Hakusembe River Lodge, close to Rundu. The drive along dirt roads was rewarding, with some good new birds like Southern Black Tit, Southern Yellow White-eyes, our first Chinspot Batises and Purple Roller, some more Black-faced Babblers, a cooperative Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird pair, a showy Lizard Buzzard, a lone Bradfield's Hornbill and many more. Upon arrival, we soon discovered a new avifauna with several birds new for us, including Arrow-marked and the common Hartlaub's Babbler, White-browed Robin-Chats, Holub's Golden Weavers, Violet-backed Starlings on the lawn, Kurrichane Thrushes, Lesser Striped and Wire-tailed Swallows, nice Little Bee-eaters, a migrating flock of European Bee-eaters, Swamp Boubous, Coppery-tailed Coucals amongst others. A Cape Clawless Otter was also sighted on the river, and a Rufous-bellied Heron flew past at dusk.



*Spotted Eagle-Owl roosting and the southern african endemic Dusky Sunbird (JM)*

Today's morning was devoted to some very special woodland birds we still had to find. At dawn, Steve saw 2 Bat Hawks flying over the lodge. We first did a brief stop at Rundu's sewage works, which were quite productive. The reeds held Lesser Swamp, African Reed, Sedge and Little Rush Warblers, on the marshes Greater Painted and African Snipes, Collared Pratincoles, Marsh, Wood and Curlew Sandpipers, African Wattled Lapwing, Banded and Brown-throated Martins were also observed. We also recorded our first Magpie Shrikes nearby. The first hour in the woodland drew a blank, as we looked for Souza's Shrike for a long time without seeing anything but a fly over Southern Carmine Bee-eater. Further along the road, we deemed the habitat good enough and wandered around for a short time, and much to our amazement, a cooperative Souza's Shrike pair was located just near our vehicle! We continued birding and saw a great set of species, including Arnot's Chats, Green-capped Eremomelas, White-crested Helmetshrikes, Purple and Lilac-breasted Rollers, but no sign of Rufous-bellied Tit unfortunately. We had lunch at Popa Falls, where abundant wildlife made a pleasant change and added a good number of new species for the trip, including Jameson's, Brown and Red-billed Firefinches, Greater and Lesser Honeyguides, Black-capped Bulbul, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Collared Sunbird and Crested Barbet amongst others. We then arrived at Ndhovu, where we took a boat ride on the Kavango river until the evening. Birds were plentiful, and the highlights came 10 seconds after we started the ride, with 2 excellent White-backed Night Herons close to the camp. We navigated further down river and got granted with unforgettable close looks at Southern Carmine, Little and White-fronted Bee-eaters, a surprise in the form of 3 Wattled Cranes flying over us, Rufous-bellied Heron, Luapula Cisticola, Water Thick-knees, some more African Wattled Lapwings, African Fish Eagle, Bateleurs, Pied and Malachite Kingfishers, Meyer's Parrots, hundreds of Burchell's, Meve's and Greater Blue-eared Starlings, two African Skimmers and best of all yet another Bat Hawk! A three Bat Hawk's day along the Kavango river!



*The rare Souza's Shrike (top left), a showy Jameson's Firefinch and a very confiding Little Sparrowhawk in a bowl! (JM)*

An early morning pre-breakfast outing didn't produce the hoped-for Rufous-bellied Tit, but we had great views of Meyer's Parrots, Meve's and Burchell's Starlings, Black-collared Barbet and an amazingly confiding Little Sparrowhawk, sitting in a bowl in front of our lodge for 15 minutes! We left on time to enter Mahango Game Reserve early enough for some cool birding. The park was extremely dry (like the rest of Namibia and Botswana) and the Okavango at its lowest level since decades. Birds weren't plentiful as hoped, but we did find some good ones like 6 Wattled Cranes, Long-toed Lapwings, a lone Lesser Spotted Eagle, some Goliath Herons, Hamerkops, flocks of Southern Pied Babbler, Lark-like Buntings, many Southern Carmine Bee-eaters and some other commoner species. Crossing the border to Botswana, we soon arrived at Shakawe river lodge, our accommodation for the next two nights. The gardens were filled with African Green Pigeons, Southern Brown-throated and Thick-billed Weavers, Black-collared and Crested Barbets, Terrestrial Brownbills and many more. At dusk, we gained great views of a pair of African Wood Owls and a Fiery-necked Nightjar.



*A fantastic White-fronted Bee-eater along the Okavango (JM)*



*African Elephants at sunset and the sought-after Wattled Crane from a short boatride on the Okavango! (JM)*

A full day on the mighty Okavango river was planned for today, and we were soon off to look for the number one speciality of the area. On the way, one male African Pygmy Goose delighted us, as did dozens of White-fronted and Southern Carmine Bee-eaters, Crested Barbets, African Skimmers, hundreds of Collared Pratincoles, Goliath Herons, Southern Brown-throated, Thick-billed and Holub's Golden Weavers. Once on site, it didn't take long for us to be looking through the scope at two magnificent and huge Pel's Fishing Owls, one of the largest on earth and for sure one of the top African birds. Wow! After these emotions, we went to one of the rare plains still partially flooded to look for Slaty Egret, a bird endemic to the Okavango delta and tributaries and hence the most sought-after species of the area. Again, thanks to our local guide and boatman Jack, a nice Slaty Egret was in our bins, allowing us a detailed sighting of this localised heron. Also present were our first Pink-backed Pelicans, cool Black Herons, African Hawk-Eagle, many Long-toed Lapwings and a great Saddle-billed Stork to finish with.



*African Wood Owl (top left), Okavango star Pel's Fishing Owl and an African Skimmer pair near Shakawe in Botswana (JM)*

Back to the lodge for lunch and rest, gardens were packed with Green Wood Hoopoes, Holub's Golden Weavers, Black-capped and African Red-eyed Bulbuls and Golden-tailed Woodpeckers. We went again for a few hours on the river to look for the remaining specialities this area had to offer. Main targets Chirping Cisticola and Greater Swamp Warblers showed well, and we found a small breeding colony of African Skimmers, about 500 Collared Pratincoles, African Wattled Lapwing, African Marsh Harriers, Black-winged Kites, Little Rush and Lesser Swamp Warblers, Violet-backed and Greater Blue-eared Starlings, Spectacled and again Southern Brown-throated Weavers. At the lodge, Fiery-necked Nightjars were active again and we called it a day after some well-deserved pizzas!

Today we set off early towards Rundu back in Namibia and stopped en-route several times to look for some missing species. We walked for hours and hours in prime Rufous-bellied Tit habitat, finding nothing but a Fawn-coloured Lark, which was excellent given we had missed the species earlier. Small flocks kept us a little busy, with Green-capped Eremomelas, Brubrus, Chinspot Batises, Southern Black Tits and many more. We had box lunch at a random picnic site, and there they were! Two nice Rufous-bellied Tits spent their midday in the large tree over our lunch, much to our amazement. Birding is so cool. We then went straight to check-in at our lodge in Rundu and went back to the sewage works for the end of the day. Baillon's Crake and Red-chested Flufftail were heard, African Rail was seen briefly twice and we added Senegal Coucal to our list. South African Cliff Swallows were on the move, and by dusk we were delighted when an excellent Marsh Owl flew out of the reeds and sat right in front of us, allowing great scope studies before darkness! We went back to the lodge for some beers and dinner, which was interrupted by 2 Square-tailed Nightjars which posed nicely atop bushes in front of the dining room – the 3<sup>rd</sup> nightjar of the tour seen well.



*The scarce Rufous-bellied Tit was eventually seen well near Rundu (JM)*

Next day was spent transferring from Rundu to Erongo. The drive was uneventful, but we did pick up Lesser Masked Weaver at our lunch stop in Otjiwarongo. Arriving late afternoon at the wonderful Erongo Wilderness Lodge gave us enough time for some productive birding. First on was a female Hartlaub's Spurfowl, giving incredible views down to a few meters, much to our delight as some of the group didn't connect with the species at Huab. Some White-tailed Shrikes were also present, with numerous Monteiro's Hornbill, Rosy-faced Lovebirds, Green-winged Pytilias and many more. As dusk fell, Freckled Nightjars started calling from everywhere and one gave great views.



We left Erongo early next morning back to Windhoek, but not before having a delicious last breakfast and views of a Rosy-faced Lovebirds Christmas Tree! Nothing new during the drive back, some Short-toed Rock Thrushes, a huge Martial Eagle sitting politely on a roadside pole, flocks of Namaqua Sandgrouse and an Ant-eating Chat. It was then time to end up this successful tour at Windhoek airport.



*Rosy-faced Lovebirds are near-endemic to Namibia and seen repeatedly during this tour (JM)*

### **BIRDS OF THE TOUR (AS VOTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS)**

1. Southern Carmine Bee-eater
2. Pel's Fishing Owl
3. Crimson-breasted Bushshrike
4. Rockrunner
5. Slaty Egret = White-tailed Shrike = Herero Chat

### **SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR**

The species names and taxonomy used in the report follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **2019. IOC World Bird List (v 9.1)**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. The online checklist, available to download at the above website, includes all relevant taxonomic notes. The website also includes a useful section outlining recent taxonomic decisions and upcoming proposals.

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).

**Common Ostrich** *Struthio camelus* Seen several times, mostly in the Namib and Etosha.

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* Common throughout, first at Windhoek.

**Crested Francolin** *Dendroperdix sephaena* Seen near Etosha.

**Hartlaub's Spurfowl** ◊ (H Francolin) *Pternistis hartlaubi* Seen at Huab and Erongo Wilderness lodge.

**Red-billed Spurfowl** ◊ (R-b Francolin) *Pternistis adspersus* Common throughout, first at Windhoek.

**Swainson's Spurfowl** ◊ (S Francolin) *Pternistis swainsonii* Seen at Manago Game Reserve.



*Hartlaub's Spurfowl (left) played hard to see. Swainson's Spurfowl (right) was easier! A cute African Pygmy Goose below (JM)*

**White-faced Whistling Duck (W-f Duck)** *Dendrocygna viduata* Seen several times in the Okavango.

**Spur-winged Goose** *Plectropterus gambensis* Seen several times in the Okavango.

**Knob-billed Duck (Comb D)** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Seen several times in the Okavango.

**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Common throughout, first at Gammams.

**South African Shelduck** ◊ *Tadorna cana* Seen several times, first at Gammams.

**African Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus auritus* One on the Okavango.

**Hottentot Teal** *Spatula hottentota* Seen at Gammams and in the Okavango.

**Cape Shoveler** ♦ *Spatula smithii* Seen at Walvis bay bird sanctuary.

**Cape Teal** *Anas capensis* First seen at Gammams.

**Red-billed Teal (R-b Duck)** *Anas erythrorhyncha* First seen at Gammams.

**Maccoa Duck** *Oxyura maccoa* Seen at Walvis bay bird sanctuary.

**Fiery-necked Nightjar** *Caprimulgus pectoralis* Seen at Shakawe river lodge.

**Freckled Nightjar** *Caprimulgus tristigma* Seen well at Huab and Erongo Wilderness Lodges.

**Square-tailed Nightjar (Mozambique N, Gabon N)** *Caprimulgus fossii* Seen well at Rundu.



*Square-tailed Nightjar and its diagnostic white outer tail feathers; Grey Go-away-bird was common throughout (JM)*

**African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus* Common throughout.

**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba* Seen a few times, first at Windhoek.  
**Bradfield's Swift** ◊ *Apus bradfieldi* Seen at Windhoek.  
**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Common throughout, first at Windhoek.  
**White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* Common throughout, first at Windhoek.  
**Grey Go-away-bird (G Lourie)** *Corythaixoides concolor* Common throughout.



Two dry-country birds: Red-crested Korhaan (above) and Double-banded Sandgrouse (JM)

**Kori Bustard** *Ardeotis kori* Many at Etosha.  
**Ludwig's Bustard** ◊ *Neotis ludwigii* Several seen in the Namib and Etosha.  
**Rüppell's Korhaan** ◊ *Eupodotis rueppellii* A few in the Namib.  
**Red-crested Korhaan (Crested Bustard)** *Lophotis ruficrista* Seen a few times, first near Huab.  
**Northern Black Korhaan** *Afrotis afraoides* Many in Etosha.

**Senegal Coucal** *Centropus senegalensis* One at Rundu.  
**Coppery-tailed Coucal** *Centropus cupreicaudus* Several in the Okavango.  
**Namaqua Sandgrouse** ◊ *Pterocles namaqua* Seen many times, biggest flocks in Etosha.  
**Double-banded Sandgrouse** *Pterocles bicinctus* Seen a few times, first in the Namib.  
**Burchell's Sandgrouse** ◊ *Pterocles burchelli* Good numbers at Etosha.  
**Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon)** *Columba livia* Seen in the main cities.  
**Speckled Pigeon (Rock P)** *Columba guinea* Seen near the main cities of Windhoek and Walvis Bay.  
**Mourning Collared Dove (African Mourning D)** *Streptopelia decipiens* Regularly seen in the north.  
**Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata* Thousands in the north.  
**Ring-necked Dove (Cape Turtle D)** *Streptopelia capicola* Common throughout.  
**Laughing Dove (Palm D)** *Spilopelia senegalensis* Common throughout.  
**Emerald-spotted Wood Dove (Green-spotted D)** *Turtur chalcospilos* Seen regularly, first in Etosha.  
**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* Seen regularly, most common in the north.  
**African Green Pigeon** *Treron calvus* Common at Shakawe.  
**Red-chested Flufftail** *Sarothrura rufa* (H) One heard at Rundu.  
**African Rail (A Water R)** *Rallus caerulescens* One seen at Rundu.  
**Black Crake** *Amaurornis flavirostra* Seen at all wetlands, first at Gammams.  
**Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla* (H) Heard at Rundu.  
**African Swamphen (A Purple S)** *Porphyrio madagascariensis* Seen several times, first at Gammams.  
**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Common on all wetlands.  
**Red-knobbed Coot (Crested C)** *Fulica cristata* Common on all wetlands.  
**Wattled Crane** ◊ *Grus carunculata* 2 at Ndhovu, 6 at Mahango and 2 at Shakawe.  
**Blue Crane** ◊ *Grus paradisea* 4 at Etosha.  
**Little Grebe (Dabchick)** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Common on all waterbodies.  
**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis* Hundreds at Walvis Bay.  
**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* Thousands at Walvis Bay.  
**Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* Thousands at Walvis Bay.



White-fronted Plover from Walvis Bay (JM)

**Water Thick-knee (W Dikkop)** *Burhinus vermiculatus* Common along the Okavango.  
**African Oystercatcher** ◊ (A Black O) *Haematopus moquini* Seen at Walvis Bay.  
**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Common on all waterbodies.  
**Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* Hundreds at Walvis Bay.

**Long-toed Lapwing (L-t Plover) *Vanellus crassirostris*** Several along the Okavango.  
**Blacksmith Lapwing (B Plover) *Vanellus armatus*** Common throughout.  
**Crowned Lapwing (C Plover) *Vanellus coronatus*** Common throughout in small numbers.  
**African Wattled Lapwing (A W Plover) *Vanellus senegallus*** Several along the Okavango.  
**Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola*** Hundreds at Walvis Bay.  
**Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*** Several at Walvis Bay and Rundu.  
**Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*** Common at Walvis Bay and along the Okavango.  
**Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*** Seen on all wetlands.  
**White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*** Hundreds at Walvis Bay.  
**Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus*** About 1500 at Walvis Bay, 30 at Etosha.  
**Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* (LO)** One at Rundu.  
**African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*** Seen on all wetlands.  
**Whimbrel (Eurasian W) *Numenius [phaeopus] phaeopus*** Dozens at Walvis Bay.



*The near-endemic Burchell's Courser in Etosha (JM)*

**Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*** Hundreds at Walvis Bay.  
**Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*** Dozens at Walvis Bay.  
**Ruff *Calidris pugnax*** Seen on all wetlands.  
**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*** Hundreds at Walvis Bay, some others in the north.  
**Sanderling *Calidris alba*** Dozens at Walvis Bay.  
**Little Stint *Calidris minuta*** Hundreds at Walvis Bay.  
**African Snipe (Ethiopian S) *Gallinago nigripennis*** Two at Rundu.  
**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*** Seen on all wetlands.  
**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*** A few at Walvis Bay.  
**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*** Seen on all wetlands.  
**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*** Seen on all wetlands.  
**Burchell's Courser ◊ *Cursorius rufus*** A dozen in Etosha.  
**Double-banded Courser (Two-banded C) *Rhinoptilus africanus*** Dozens in Etosha.  
**Collared Pratincole (Red-winged P) *Glareola pratincola*** About 600 on the Okavango.  
**Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis*** Only one on the Okavango.  
**African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris*** About a hundred on the Okavango.  
**Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*** One at Walvis Bay.  
**Hartlaub's Gull ◊ *Chroicocephalus hartlaubii*** Hundreds at Walvis Bay.

**Kelp Gull (Cape G)** ◊ *Larus [dominicanus] vetula* Dozens at Walvis Bay.  
**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* Dozens at Walvis Bay.  
**Greater Crested Tern (Swift T)** *Thalasseus bergii* Dozens at Walvis Bay.  
**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis* Dozens at Walvis Bay.  
**Damara Tern** ◊ *Sternula balaenarum* About 15 at Walvis Bay.  
**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* Hundreds at Walvis Bay.  
**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* A dozen at Walvis Bay.  
**Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)** *Stercorarius parasiticus* One off Walvis Bay.  
**African Penguin** ◊ (Jackass P) *Spheniscus demersus* One off Walvis Bay.



Two rare birds in Namibia, seen during a misty seawatching session off Walvis Bay: African Penguin and Northern Giant Petrel (JM)

**Wilson's Storm Petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus* A dozen off Walvis Bay.  
**Northern Giant Petrel** *Macronectes halli* One off Walvis Bay – a write-in !  
**White-chinned Petrel** *Procellaria aequinoctialis* One off Walvis Bay.  
**Sooty Shearwater** *Ardenna grisea* A hundred off Walvis Bay.  
**Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* A few along the Okavango.  
**African Openbill (A Open-billed Stork)** *Anastomus lamelligerus* Many along the Okavango.  
**Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* One at Huab lodge.  
**Saddle-billed Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* One along the Okavango.  
**Marabou Stork** *Leptoptilos crumenifer* Many along the Okavango.  
**Cape Gannet** ◊ *Morus capensis* A hundred off Walvis Bay.  
**Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C)** *Microcarbo africanus* Seen on all wetlands.  
**Crowned Cormorant** ◊ *Microcarbo coronatus* Several at Walvis Bay.  
**White-breasted Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Several at Walvis Bay.  
**Cape Cormorant** ◊ *Phalacrocorax capensis* Several at Walvis Bay.  
**African Darter** *Anhinga rufa* Regularly seen on wetlands, common along the Okavango.  
**African Sacred Ibis (Sacred I)** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* First at Windhoek, then along the Okavango.  
**Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash* Two along the Okavango.  
**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* Two at Walvis Bay, several along the Okavango.  
**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* Several along the Okavango.  
**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus* One at Windhoek, one along the Okavango.  
**White-backed Night Heron** ◊ *Gorsachius leuconotus* Two at Ndhovu, two at Shakawe.  
**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* (LO) One at Shakawe.  
**Striated Heron (Green-backed H)** *Butorides striata* Several seen.  
**Squacco Heron (Common S H)** *Ardeola ralloides* Dozens along the Okavango.

**Rufous-bellied Heron** *Ardeola rufiventris* One at Hakusembe, one at Ndhovu.  
**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Several seen.  
**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Several seen.  
**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala* Seen a few times, first at Gammams.  
**Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* Several along the Okavango.



*Black-chested Snake Eagle and a huge Lappet-faced Vulture at a waterhole in Etosha (JM)*

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* Several along the Okavango.  
**Great Egret (Great White E)** *Ardea alba* Several along the Okavango.  
**Intermediate Egret (Yellow-billed E)** *Ardea [intermedia] brachyrhyncha* Several along the Okavango.  
**Black Heron (B Egret)** *Egretta ardesiaca* Four along the Okavango.  
**Slaty Egret** *Egretta vinaceigula* One along the Okavango.  
**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Seen regularly.  
**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta* One at Windhoek, several near Shakawe.  
**Great White Pelican (Eastern W P)** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Several along the Okavango.  
**Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens* 8 along the Okavango.  
**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Seen twice along the Okavango.  
**Black-winged Kite (Black-shouldered K)** *Elanus caeruleus* Seen a few times.  
**African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene)** *Polyboroides typus* Seen a few times.  
**White-backed Vulture (African W-b V)** *Gyps africanus* Hundreds at Etosha, fewer elsewhere.  
**White-headed Vulture** *Trigonoceps occipitalis* One at Etosha.  
**Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos tracheliotos* Several seen, most numerous at Etosha.  
**Black-chested Snake Eagle (B-breasted S N)** *Circaetus pectoralis* Several seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Brown Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinereus* Seen a few times.  
**Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* Several at Etosha, fewer elsewhere.  
**Bat Hawk** *Macheiramphus alcinus* Three along the Okavango!  
**Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus* Seen a few times, first at Etosha.  
**Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Clanga pomarina* One at Mahango Game Reserve.  
**Wahlberg's Eagle** *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* One at Hakusembe, one at Shakawe.  
**Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* Seen regularly.  
**Verreaux's Eagle (Black E)** *Aquila verreauxii* Seen a couple of times.  
**African Hawk-Eagle** *Aquila spilogaster* Seen regularly.  
**Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* One at Rundu.  
**Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar* Seen regularly.





*Bateleur (here an adult female) is a unique bird-of-prey (JM)*

**Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* Seen a few times in the north.

**Pale Chanting Goshawk (Southern P C G)** *Melierax canorus* Many seen.

**Shikra (Little Banded Goshawk)** *Accipiter badius* Regularly seen, first at Windhoek.

**Little Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter minullus* One very close at Ndhovu.



*Namibia is an excellent country to connect with the mythical Verreaux's Eagle (JM)*

**African Marsh Harrier** *Circus ranivorus* Several along the Okavango.

**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius* Several along the Okavango.

**African Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus vocifer* Seen regularly near wetlands.

**Common Buzzard (Steppe B)** *Buteo [buteo] vulpinus* One near Windhoek.

**Augur Buzzard** *Buteo augur* A few between Windhoek and Walvis Bay.  
**African Scops Owl** *Otus senegalensis* One seen well at Huab, others heard.  
**Southern White-faced Owl (S W-f Scops O)** *Ptilopsis granti* Fantastic sighting at Huab.  
**Spotted Eagle-Owl** *Bubo africanus* One at Hakusembe.  
**Pel's Fishing Owl** ◊ *Scotopelia peli* Two along the Okavango.  
**African Wood Owl** *Strix woodfordii* Two at Shakawe River Lodge.  
**Pearl-spotted Owlet (P-s Owl)** *Glaucidium perlatum* Seen several times.  
**Marsh Owl** *Asio capensis* One at Rundu.  
**White-backed Mousebird** ◊ *Colius colius* Many near Windhoek and Walvis Bay.  
**Red-faced Mousebird** *Urocolius indicus* Many seen, first at Walvis Bay.  
**African Hoopoe** *Upupa africana* Many seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Green Wood Hoopoe (Red-billed W H)** *Phoeniculus purpureus* Several seen along the Okavango.  
**Violet Wood Hoopoe** ◊ (Southern V W H) *Phoeniculus damarensis* Several seen at Huab and Etosha.  
**Common Scimitarbill (Greater S)** *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* Several seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Damara Red-billed Hornbill** ◊ (Damara H) *Tockus damarensis* Many seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Southern Red-billed Hornbill** *Tockus rufirostris* Several seen, first in eastern Etosha.  
**Monteiro's Hornbill** ◊ *Tockus monteiri* Many seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill** *Tockus leucomelas* Many seen, first near Windhoek.  
**Bradfield's Hornbill** ◊ *Lophoceros bradfieldi* Several seen in the north.  
**African Grey Hornbill** *Lophoceros nasutus* Many seen.



*African Scops Owl showed in the same tree as Northern White-faced Owl at Huab (left) and Lizard Buzzard (JM)*

**Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R)** *Coracias naevius* Several seen during journeys.  
**Lilac-breasted Roller** *Coracias caudatus* Several seen.  
**Striped Kingfisher** *Halcyon chelicuti* Two near Rundu.  
**Malachite Kingfisher** *Corythornis cristatus* One at Ndhovu.  
**Giant Kingfisher** *Megaceryle maxima* Two at Shakawe.

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Many along the Okavango.  
**Swallow-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops hirundineus* Many seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus* Several along the Okavango.  
**White-fronted Bee-eater** *Merops bullockoides* Hundreds along the Okavango.  
**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* Several flocks seen.  
**Southern Carmine Bee-eater** *Merops nubicooides* Dozens along the Okavango.  
**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird (Y-f Tinker Barbet)** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* Two near Rundu.  
**Acacia Pied Barbet (Pied B)** *Tricholaema leucomelas* Seen regularly, first at Windhoek.  
**Black-collared Barbet** *Lybius torquatus* Several along the Okavango.  
**Crested Barbet** *Trachyphonus vaillantii* Several at Shakawe.  
**Lesser Honeyguide** *Indicator minor* One at Popa Falls.  
**Greater Honeyguide** *Indicator indicator* One at Popa Falls, one at Shakawe.



Portrait of a Damara Red-billed Hornbill from Etosha (JM)

**Golden-tailed Woodpecker** *Campethera abingoni* Regularly seen in the bush.  
**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicos fuscescens* Seen a few times, first near Windhoek.  
**Rock Kestrel** *Falco rupicolus* Regularly seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Greater Kestrel (White-eyed K)** *Falco rupicoloides* Seen a few times in the Namib and at Etosha.  
**Red-necked Falcon** ◊ *Falco chicquera* Two pairs at Etosha.  
**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* A few at Etosha and Rundu.  
**Meyer's Parrot (Brown P)** *Poicephalus meyeri* Several along the Okavango.  
**Rüppell's Parrot** ◊ *Poicephalus rueppellii* Several at Huab.  
**Rosy-faced Lovebird** ◊ *Agapornis roseicollis* Seen several times, biggest numbers at Erongo.  
**Chinspot Batis** *Batis molitor* Seen many times in the north.  
**Pririt Batis** ◊ *Batis pririt* Seen many times, first at Windhoek.  
**White-tailed Shrike** ◊ *Lanioturdus torquatus* Only seen at Huab and Erongo Wilderness Lodge.  
**Orange-breasted Bushshrike** *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* (H) One at Shakawe.  
**Bokmakierie** ◊ *Telophorus zeylonus* Two seen near Spreetshoogte.  
**Brown-crowned Tchagra (Three-streaked T, Brown-headed T)** *Tchagra australis* A few near Rundu.

**Black-crowned Tchagra (B-headed T) *Tchagra senegalus*** One near Rundu.  
**Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla*** Regularly seen from Etosha northwards.  
**Swamp Boubou** ◊ *Laniarius bicolor* Many along the Okavango.  
**Crimson-breasted Shrike** ◊ *Laniarius atrococcineus* Many seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Brubru *Nilaus afer*** Seen a couple of times, first at Windhoek.



Rüppell's Parrot walking to a drinking pool (left) and the excellent Bokmakierie (JM)

**White-crested Helmetshrike (White H) *Prionops plumatus*** Seen a few times, first a Khorixas.  
**Maggie Shrike (African Long-tailed S) *Urolestes melanoleucus*** Many in the north.  
**Southern White-crowned Shrike *Eurocephalus anguitimens*** Many between Etosha and Rundu.  
**Souza's Shrike** ◊ *Lanius souzae* A pair near Rundu.  
**Southern Fiscal (S F Shrike) *Lanius collaris*** Seen a few times.  
**Black-headed Oriole (Eastern B-h O) *Oriolus larvatus*** Seen along the Okavango.  
**Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*** Seen throughout.  
**Cape Crow (C Rook, Black C) *Corvus capensis*** Seen a few times.  
**Pied Crow *Corvus albus*** Regularly seen.  
**Southern Black Tit** ◊ *Melaniparus niger* Seen a few times around Rundu.  
**Carp's Tit** ◊ (C's Black T) *Melaniparus carpi* Seen at Khorixas and Huab.  
**Rufous-bellied Tit** ◊ *Melaniparus rufiventris* A pair near Rundu.  
**Ashy Tit (A Grey T) ◊ *Melaniparus cinerascens*** Seen a few times near Windhoek.  
**Cape Penduline Tit** ◊ *Anthoscopus minutus* Small flock at Spreetshoogte.  
**Spike-heeled Lark** ◊ *Chersomanes albofasciata* Many at Etosha.  
**Gray's Lark** ◊ *Ammomanopsis grayi* A couple in the Namib.  
**Benguela Long-billed Lark** ◊ *Certhilauda benguelensis* Two near Uis.  
**Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark (C-b Finchlark) *Eremopterix leucotis*** Dozens at Etosha.  
**Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark** ◊ (G-b Finchlark) *Eremopterix verticalis* Hundreds at Etosha.  
**Sabota Lark** ◊ *Calendulauda sabota* Regularly seen.  
**Fawn-colored Lark *Calendulauda africanoides*** One near Rundu.  
**Dune Lark** ◊ *Calendulauda erythrochlamys* A pair near Rostock Ritz.  
**Eastern Clapper Lark** ◊ *Mirafra fasciolata* A few in Etosha.  
**Stark's Lark** ◊ *Spizocorys starki* A few in the Namib and in Etosha.  
**Pink-billed Lark** ◊ *Spizocorys conirostris* Dozens in Etosha.  
**Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea*** Hundreds in Etosha.



Two Namib desert specials: Gray's (left) and Stark's Larks (JM)

- African Red-eyed Bulbul** ♦ *Pycnonotus nigricans* Seen throughout.
- Dark-capped Bulbul (Black-eyed B)** *Pycnonotus tricolor* Seen along the Okavango.
- Yellow-bellied Greenbul (African Y-b Bulbul)** *Chlorocichla flaviventris* Seen along the Okavango.
- Terrestrial Brownbul (T Bulbul)** *Phyllastrephus terrestris* Seen near Rundu and Shakawe.
- Brown-throated Martin (Plain M)** *Riparia paludicola* Seen a few times, most common along Okavango.
- Banded Martin** *Riparia cincta* A few seen.
- Barn Swallow (European S)** *Hirundo rustica* A few seen in the north.
- White-throated Swallow** *Hirundo albigularis* A few seen at Gammams.
- Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii* Seen along the Okavango.
- Pearl-breasted Swallow** *Hirundo dimidiata* Many seen, first at Gammams.
- Rock Martin (African R M)** *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Many seen in the arid interior and at Walvis bay.
- Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum* A few seen.
- Greater Striped Swallow** *Cecropis cucullata* Many seen in the arid interior.
- Lesser Striped Swallow** *Cecropis abyssinica* Many along the Okavango.
- Red-breasted Swallow (Rufous-chested S)** *Cecropis semirufa* Seen a few times, first near Windhoek.
- Mosque Swallow** *Cecropis senegalensis* A few seen at Ndhovu.
- South African Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon spilodera* Surprisingly regular, first in the Namib.
- Rockrunner** ♦ *Achaetops pycnopygius* A pair at Huab lodge.
- Long-billed Crombec** *Sylvietta rufescens* Many seen, first near Windhoek.
- Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* Several seen, first at Khorixas.
- Greater Swamp Warbler** ♦ *Acrocephalus rufescens* A few seen along the Okavango.
- Lesser Swamp Warbler (Cape Reed W)** *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* Regularly heard and seen.
- Sedge Warbler (European S W)** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Two near Rundu.
- African Reed Warbler (A Marsh W)** *Acrocephalus baeticatus* Regularly seen and heard.
- Little Rush Warbler (African Sedge W)** *Bradypterus baboecala* Some heard, one seen near Shakawe.
- Rattling Cisticola** *Cisticola chiniana* Regularly seen from Etosha northwards.
- Tinkling Cisticola** *Cisticola rufilatus* A few seen near Rundu.
- Luapula Cisticola** ♦ *Cisticola luapula* Seen at Ndhovu, heard along the Okavango.
- Chirping Cisticola** ♦ *Cisticola pipiens* A few seen along the Okavango.
- Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tailed C)** *Cisticola juncidis* A few seen in the north.
- Desert Cisticola** *Cisticola aridulus* Two at Etosha.



More Larks! Clockwise from top left: Benguela Long-billed, Eastern Clapper, Spike-heeled and Red-capped Larks (JM)

- Tawny-flanked Prinia** *Prinia subflava* Many seen along the Okavango.
- Black-chested Prinia** ◊ *Prinia flavicans* Many seen in the arid interior, first at Windhoek.
- Yellow-breasted Apalis** *Apalis flavida* A few seen at Etosha.
- Rufous-eared Warbler** ◊ *Malcorus pectoralis* Two at Etosha.
- Grey-backed Camaroptera (G-b Bleating Warbler)** *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Regularly seen.
- Barred Wren-Warbler (African W-w, African Barred W)** *Calamonastes fasciolatus* Seen at Windhoek.
- Yellow-bellied Eremomela** *Eremomela icteropygialis* Several seen.
- Green-capped Eremomela** *Eremomela scotops* Several flocks near Rundu.
- Burnt-necked Eremomela** *Eremomela usticollis* Seen a few times, first near Windhoek.
- Bare-cheeked Babbler** ◊ *Turdoides gymnogenys* Seen a few times at Khorixas and Huab.
- Arrow-marked Babbler** *Turdoides jardineii* Several flocks along the Okavango.
- Southern Pied Babbler** ◊ *Turdoides bicolor* Seen at Etosha and Mahango.
- Black-faced Babbler** ◊ (B-lored B) *Turdoides melanops* Seen at Etosha and near Rundu.
- Hartlaub's Babbler** *Turdoides hartlaubii* Many along the Okavango.
- Chestnut-vented Warbler (C-v Titbabbler)** *Sylvia subcoerulea* Many seen in the arid interior.
- Layard's Warbler** ◊ (L Titbabbler) *Sylvia layardi* One at Spreetshoogte.



After Larks... Cisticolas! Luapula (left) and Chirping Cisticolas, along the Okavango (JM)

- Orange River White-eye** ◊ *Zosterops pallidus* A few at Walvis Bay.
- Southern Yellow White-eye** *Zosterops anderssoni* Many along the Okavango.
- Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea* Many seen, thousands at Gammams.
- Cape Starling (C Glossy S)** *Lamprotornis nitens* Many seen.
- Greater Blue-eared Starling (G B-e Glossy S)** *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* Several along the Okavango.
- Meves's Starling** ◊ *Lamprotornis mevesii* Several seen, first in eastern Etosha.
- Burchell's Starling** ◊ *Lamprotornis australis* Several seen, first in Etosha.
- Violet-backed Starling (Plum-coloured S)** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* Many seen, first near Huab.
- Pale-winged Starling** ◊ *Onychognathus nabouroup* Many seen in the arid interior.
- Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* A few seen along the Okavango.
- Red-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* A few seen along the Okavango.
- Groundscraper Thrush** *Turdus litsitsirupa* Many seen.
- Kurrichane Thrush** *Turdus libonyana* Several seen along the Okavango.
- Karoo Scrub Robin (Karoo R)** *Cercotrichas coryphoeus* Several at Spreetshoogte.
- Kalahari Scrub Robin** ◊ (Kalahari R) *Cercotrichas paena* Several seen, first at Windhoek.
- White-browed Scrub Robin (White-browed R)** *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Several, first at Etosha.
- Southern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis pammelaina* One near Rundu.
- Pale Flycatcher (Mouse-coloured F, Pallid F)** *Melaenornis pallidus* Several near Rundu.
- Chat Flycatcher** ◊ *Melaenornis infuscatus* Several in the arid interior.
- Marico Flycatcher** ◊ *Melaenornis mariquensis* Many seen.
- Ashy Flycatcher (Blue-grey F)** *Muscicapa caerulescens* A few at Shakawe River Lodge.
- White-browed Robin-Chat** *Cossypha heuglini* Several along the Okavango.
- Short-toed Rock Thrush** ◊ *Monticola brevipes* Several seen in the arid interior.
- African Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus* A few along the Okavango.
- Karoo Chat** ◊ *Emarginata schlegelii* A few in the Namib.
- Tractrac Chat** ◊ *Emarginata tractrac* A few in the Namib.
- Ant-eating Chat** ◊ (Southern A-e C) ◊ *Myrmecocichla formicivore* A few in Etosha and near Windhoek.
- Mountain Wheatear (M Chat)** *Myrmecocichla monticola* Many in the arid interior.
- Arnot's Chat** ◊ *Myrmecocichla arnotti* A pair near Rundu.
- Familiar Chat (Red-tailed C)** *Oenanthe familiaris* Many seen in the arid interior.
- Herero Chat** ◊ *Namibornis herero* One at Spreetshoogte.
- Collared Sunbird** *Hedydipna collaris* Several along the Okavango.
- Scarlet-chested Sunbird** *Chalcomitra senegalensis* Several at Etosha and along the Okavango.
- Marico Sunbird** *Cinnyris mariquensis* Several seen, first at Windhoek.

**White-bellied Sunbird** *Cinnyris talatala* Many seen, first in Etosha.  
**Dusky Sunbird** ◊ *Cinnyris fuscus* Several seen, first near Windhoek.  
**House Sparrow (introduced)** *Passer domesticus* Seen in major cities.  
**Great Sparrow** *Passer motitensis* Commonly encountered in the arid interior.  
**Cape Sparrow** ◊ *Passer melanurus* Several seen, first at Spreetshoogte.



Three range-restricted Babblers: Bare-cheeked (top left), Black-faced (right) and a trio of Southern Pied Babblers digging in a dung (JM)

**Northern Grey-headed Sparrow** *Passer griseus* Two near Rundu – a write-in!  
**Southern Grey-headed Sparrow** *Passer diffuses* Regularly seen.  
**Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow (African Y-t Sparrow)** *Gymnoris superciliaris* A few in the north.  
**Red-billed Buffalo Weaver** *Bubalornis niger* Several in the north.  
**White-browed Sparrow-Weaver** *Plocepasser mahali* Many seen.  
**Sociable Weaver** ◊ *Philetairus socius* Many in the Namib and Etosha.  
**Scaly-feathered Weaver** ◊ (S-f Finch) *Sporopipes squamifrons* Many seen.



**Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak W) *Amblyospiza albifrons*** (LO) Some near Shakawe.  
**Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*** Two along the Okavango.  
**Holub's Golden Weaver (Golden W) *Ploceus xanthops*** Many along the Okavango.  
**Southern Brown-throated Weaver *Ploceus xanthopterus*** Many along the Okavango.  
**Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius*** One at Otjiwarongo.  
**Southern Masked Weaver (Masked W) *Ploceus velatus*** Many seen.



*Karoo (above) and Kalahari Scrub Robins (JM)*

**Village Weaver (Spotted-backed W) *Ploceus cucullatus*** Several along the Okavango.  
**Chestnut Weaver *Ploceus rubiginosus*** A breeding colony in Windhoek.  
**Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps*** Only one, near Rundu.  
**Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*** Few flocks seen.

**Yellow-crowned Bishop (Golden B) *Euplectes afer*** A few near Rundu.  
**Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*** A few near Windhoek and Rundu.  
**Fan-tailed Widowbird (Red-shouldered Widow) *Euplectes axillaris*** Many along the Okavango.  
**Green-winged Pytilia (Melba Finch) *Pytilia melba*** Several seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Red-headed Finch** ◊ ***Amadina erythrocephala*** Many seen, first at Solitaire.  
**Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata*** A few near Rundu.  
**Brown Firefinch** ◊ ***Lagonosticta nitidula*** 4 at Popa Falls.  
**Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala*** (LO) 2 at Popa Falls.  
**Jameson's Firefinch *Lagonosticta rhodopareia*** 1 at Popa Falls.  
**Blue Waxbill (Blue-breasted Cordon-bleu) *Uraeginthus angolensis*** Many seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Violet-eared Waxbill** ◊ ***Uraeginthus granatinus*** Many seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*** Many seen, first at Spreetshoogte.  
**Black-faced Waxbill** ◊ ***Estrilda erythronotos*** Several seen, first at Windhoek.



Yet another one, White-browed Scrub Robin (JM)

**Shaft-tailed Whydah *Vidua regia*** Non-breeding plumage males at Windhoek.  
**Long-tailed Paradise Whydah (Eastern P W) *Vidua paradisaea*** (LO) Two at Etosha.  
**Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis*** Many seen.  
**African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*** Several along the Okavango.  
**African Pipit (Grassveld P) *Anthus cinnamomeus*** Many seen, mostly along the Okavango.  
**Nicholson's Pipit *Anthus nicholsoni*** Several seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Black-throated Canary *Crithagra atrogularis*** Many seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Yellow-fronted Canary (Y-eyed C) *Crithagra mozambica*** Many seen in the north.  
**Yellow Canary** ◊ ***Crithagra flaviventris*** Several seen, first at Windhoek.  
**White-throated Canary** ◊ ***Crithagra albogularis*** Several seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Lark-like Bunting** ◊ ***Emberiza impetuani*** Several seen, first at Spreetshoogte.  
**Cinnamon-breasted Bunting (C-b Rock B) *Emberiza tahapisi*** Only one, at Windhoek.  
**Cape Bunting** ◊ ***Emberiza capensis*** Many seen, first at Windhoek.  
**Golden-breasted Bunting (African G-b B) *Emberiza flaviventris*** Several seen, first in Etosha.



*Brown Firefinch (top left), a splendid male Violet-cheeked (right) and Black-faced Waxbills (JM)*

## MAMMALS

**Western Rock Sengi** *Elephantulus rupestris* 1 at Windhoek.

**African Elephant** *Loxodonta africana* Many seen in Etosha and along the Okavango.

**Rock Hyrax (Cape D, Cape R Hyrax)** *Procavia capensis* Many seen, first at Windhoek.

**Vervet** *Chlorocebus pygerythrus* Many seen along the Okavango.

**Chacma Baboon** *Papio ursinus* Many seen.

**Scrub Hare** *Lepus saxatilis* One near Uis.

**Dassie Rat** *Petromus typicus* Several near Huab lodge.

**Greater Cane Rat** *Thryonomys swinderianus* 6 at Ndhovu.

**Congo Rope Squirrel** *Funisciurus congicus* Several seen at Huab lodge.

**Smith's Bush Squirrel** *Paraxerus cepapi* Seen a few times, first in Etosha.

**South African Ground Squirrel (Cape Ground S)** *Xerus inauris* Seen several times, first in Windhoek.

**Cheetah** *Acinonyx jubatus* One fantastic sighting in Etosha.  
**Lion** *Panthera leo* A total of 20 in Etosha, including a mating pair.  
**Leopard** *Panthera pardus* Excellent sighting in Etosha.  
**Yellow Mongoose (Bushy-tailed Meerkat)** *Cynictis penicillate* Seen a few times, first at Windhoek.  
**Slender Mongoose** *Herpestes sanguineus* Seen a few times, first at Windhoek.  
**Banded Mongoose** *Mungos mungo* Several in Etosha.  
**Spotted Hyaena** *Crocuta Crocuta* (H) Heard in Etosha.  
**Black-backed Jackal** *Canis mesomelas* Regularly seen, first at Walvis Bay.



*Leopard starting a hunt in Etosha ! (JM)*

**African Clawless Otter (African C O)** *Aonyx capensis* One at Hakusembe.  
**Honey Badger (Ratel)** *Mellivora capensis* Great sighting of two in Etosha.  
**Afro-Australian Fur Seal** *Arctocephalus pusillus* Several seen surfing off Walvis Bay.  
**Plains Zebra (Burchell's Z)** *Equus [quagga] burchellii* In Etosha (*burchellii*) and Mahango (*chapmani*)  
**Mountain Zebra** *Equus zebra* A few dozens at Spreetshoogte.  
**White Rhinoceros** *Ceratotherium simum* (introduced) One in Etosha.  
**Black Rhinoceros** *Diceros bicornis* A few in Etosha.  
**Common Warthog** *Phacochoerus africanus* Many seen.  
**Southern Right Whale** *Eubalaena australis* One off Walvis Bay  
**Hippopotamus** *Hippopotamus amphibius* Several along the Okavango.  
**Impala** *Aepyceros melampus* Hundreds of 'Black-faced' in Etosha (*petersi*) and at Mahango (*melampus*)  
**Hartebeest (Hartebeeste)** *Alcelaphus buselaphus* Few dozens in Etosha.  
**Springbok (Springbuck)** *Antidorcas marsupialis* Many seen, first near Windhoek.  
**Common Wildebeest (Brindled Gnu)** *Connochaetes taurinus* Many seen in Etosha.  
**Topi (Sassaby)** *Damaliscus lunatus* A few at Mahango Game Reserve.  
**Sable Antelope (S Antelope)** *Hippotragus niger* One near Ndhovu, several in Mahango.  
**Waterbuck (Common W)** *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* A dozen near Ndhovu, several along the Okavango.  
**Southern Lechwe (Lechwe)** *Kobus leche* A few in Mahango.  
**Kirk's Dik-dik** *Madoqua kirkii* Many in Etosha.  
**Gemsbok (Oryx)** *Oryx gazelle* Many seen in the Namib, Etosha and Mahango.  
**Steenbok (Steinbok)** *Raphicerus campestris* Several seen, first near Windhoek.  
**Southern Reedbuck (Common R)** *Redunca arundinum* Several along the Okavango.  
**Common Duiker (Grey D)** *Sylvicapra grimmia* A few seen in Etosha.

**African Buffalo (Cape B) *Syncerus caffer*** Several along the Okavango.  
**Common Eland *Tragelaphus oryx*** A very large group of at least 84 in Etosha.  
**Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*** A few seen along the Okavango.  
**Greater Kudu (Greater K) *Tragelaphus strepsiceros*** Many seen, first near Windhoek.  
**Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis*** Many seen, mostly in Etosha.  
**Angolan Epauletted Fruit Bat *Epomophorus angolensis*** Several seen well in Rundu.  
**Peters's Epauletted Fruit Bat *Epomophorus crypturus*** Several at Mokuti.



*Springbok smelling a gang of nearby Lions in a sand storm in Etosha (JM)*

## REPTILES

**Ground Agama *Agama aculeata*** One seen near Windhoek  
**Namib Rock Agama *Agama planiceps*** Striking species, seen several times on rocky outcrops.  
**Common Barking Gecko *Ptenopus garrulus* (H)** Heard at Huab.  
**Turner's Thick-toed Gecko *Chondrodactylus turneri*** Seen at Huab.  
**Brandberg's Thick-toed Gecko *Pachydactylus gaisensis*** Seen at Huab.  
**Boulton's Namib Day Gecko *Rhoptropus boultoni*** Seen at Huab  
**Etosha Agama *Agama etoschae*** Seen in Etosha  
**Helmeted Turtle *Pelomedusa subrufa*** Seen in Etosha  
**Leopard Tortoise *Stigmochelys pardalis*** Seen near Etosha.  
**Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus*** Seen along the Okavango  
**Nile Monitor *Varanus niloticus*** Seen along the Okavango.



*Namib Rock Agama is a striking common species! And a Yellow-breasted Apalis (JM)*



*Rufous-eared Warbler has an isolated population in Etosha; The group on the Okavango in Botswana (JM)*



*A huge male Giraffe in Etosha (JM)*