

Guided birding trip with natural history specialities

in northern Namibia, Botswana & Victoria Falls

„Warblers & Pachyderms“

“A heart without dreams is like a bird without feathers.”

8 PAGES - 21 DAYS

-Suzy Kassem

Overview

This trip combines ornithology and photography seamlessly as we actively seek out birds, patiently linger in wildlife hotspots, and share a mutual appreciation for nature, resulting in excellent photo opportunities. Our expert guides from Leaflove Safaris are the ideal leaders for this journey, ensuring a rich experience filled with diverse animals and birds, and ample chances for observation and photography. We've carefully designed the itinerary to maximise the variety and quantity of wildlife encounters.

From the arid Mopane savannah to the lush palm oasis of Kunene, the open grassy steppes of the pans to the dense dry forests in the eastern part of Etosha National Park, and the water-rich Manketti forests to the mudflats, rivers, and lagoons of Caprivi, Namibia's diverse habitats offer a unique array of animals and plants. This incredible variety sets Namibia apart from other African countries. By embarking on this journey, you'll have the opportunity to fulfil your expectations and build a rich list of sightings.



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Accommodation:

All accommodations on this trip provide the essential comfort of upper-middle-class standards, featuring "en suite" bathrooms. Furthermore, their strategic locations are chosen to enhance your wildlife viewing experience and optimise route planning for the extensive driving distances in Namibia.

Day 1 & 2

arrive and dive deep into nature...

- * Meet your birding-guide at the airport.
- * In the vehicle you will find a welcome pack with map & route description
- * Experience 2 nights on a spacious private Wildlife Protectorate, created with lots of idealism and love for animals, and featuring special protection efforts for rhinos.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- * Locally guided drive in open Game-viewer

In the lodge's garden, a haven of tranquility, you will have the opportunity to capture stunning images of various songbirds, shrikes, including the striking red-bellied shrike, and even some captivating waterfowl.



Day 3 & 4

a babbler with naked ears...

- * 2 nights in a bungalow at Hobatere Lodge, a prime base for exploring Namibian semi-endemic species.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- * 3x Locally guided Drives in open Game-viewers



Private Nature Reserve in the Etjo Sandstone Formation

After arrival, we will introduce the breathtaking Etjo mountains and hill formations, adorned with their rich, red hues, set amidst the dense acacia savannah to you.

The red-crested korhaan will serenade us with their calls, and we will make regular stops to observe and photograph the myriad of "roadside birds."

Here, amidst this picturesque landscape, you'll find the remarkable fungus termite mounds that can reach heights of up to 5 meters. Along the way, be prepared for occasional warnings from the majestic greater kudu and the ever-present warthogs, while the charming faces of klipspringers will undoubtedly captivate your attention.

As you arrive at the renowned Mount Etjo, you'll have your first encounters with Namibia's magnificent wildlife. In this extensive game reserve, we will embark on open-air safari drives, encountering various antelope species but also catching glimpses of the white and black rhinoceros, elegant giraffes, and, with a bit of luck, the majestic lions and elephants that roam these lands.

Hobatere Concession

This is a truly untouched nature experience, allowing wildlife to follow the daily rhythm of Africa. Here, you can anticipate encounters with the endemic Hartmann's mountain zebra, numerous antelope, and graceful giraffes. While sightings of lions, leopards, cheetahs, and elephants are a matter of luck (and some expertise), the opportunity to observe them in their natural habitat is a thrilling possibility. Our focus in this area centres on its remarkable birdlife. Keep an eye out for the Bare-cheeked Babbler, Little Sparrowhawk, and African Scops Owlets, which are frequently spotted in the garden. During the midday break, you can watch Rüppell's parrots as they visit the waterhole, and capture moments of Carp's Black Tit singing in the surrounding Mopane trees.

As we explore the southern gorges, we'll be on the lookout for Kunene and Hartlaub Francolins. On our night drives, the chance to spot Bronze-winged Coursers and various Nightjars arises at certain times of the year, making for a captivating nocturnal adventure.

Day 5 & 6

beautiful rump on a waxbill

- * 2 nights at a rustic lodge directly on the Kunene River at Ruacana.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- * Locally guided expedition in search of Cave Chat and Cinderella Waxbill (Attention!) This trip requires some fitness as we scramble up the Zebra Mountains at 5:00am to find the Chat... if you are less fit, we will concentrate on the Waxbill and take an additional boat trip to see shorebirds.



Day 7, 8 & 9

Vultures and co. . . .

- * 1 night on Namibia's Little Serengeti, the Andoni Plain at an impressive lodge.
- * 2 nights at a good lodge situated in the eastern dry Terminalia-forest, directly adjacent to the park.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

Comment:

Our Land Cruisers, specially converted for game viewing, have wide window seats and the sunroof opens at the watering holes. So you can comfortably take pictures sitting down or standing up.

Cinderella Waxbill and tribe of the Ova-Himba

Our journey takes us to the north-western border river of Namibia, the Kunene, in search of the rare Cinderella Waxbill and the elusive Cave Chat.

Along the way, we'll traverse a picturesque landscape graced by the meandering palm groves of the Kunene River, offering a unique habitat for bird species that are exclusive to this region.

Here, we have the opportunity to spot fascinating birds such as the Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush, the Red-necked Spurfowl (ssp. afer), and with a stroke of luck, the elusive Grey Kestrel. Keep an eye out for the African Harrier Hawk and other bushveld birds that make this area their home.

Additionally, for those interested, we can make a brief stop at a Himba village, providing valuable insights into the culture and lifestyle of these pastoral people.



Etosha National Park

Our journey through Ovamboland takes us past indigenous villages nestled in the "oshanas" (flood plains) of the north. As we traverse this region, keep an eye out for Mosque Swallows among the majestic baobab trees, and you might even spot some Angolan Swallows.

Continuing our drive, we arrive at Andoni Plains, an excellent hideaway for Pink-billed and Eastern Clapper Larks. At the artesian fountain, you can observe a variety of wetland waders and water-related birds, including the graceful Whiskered Tern.

Etosha National Park, often referred to as the "Great White Place," spans over 22,000 square kilometers and ranks among Africa's most wildlife-rich parks. While the thrill of spotting a lion by the roadside or encountering a herd of elephants is undeniable, it's essential to recognize that Etosha's landscape is harsh, and its wildlife faces challenging conditions.

In this unique environment, keep an eye out for the Etosha Agama and the elegant Blue Crane, as well as the remarkable Termite mounds that serve as territorial markers for Rufous-naped Larks. Amidst dense vegetation, you may also spot the diminutive Damara Dik Dik Antelopes.

Etosha's diverse habitats, including grasslands, dry forests, floodplains, and dense acacia scrub, contribute to its extensive biodiversity. This diversity ensures that you'll encounter not only a wide array of species but also a multitude of different birds and animals within this national park.

seasonal insider's tip:

This additional program is exclusively available for booking and becomes truly rewarding when the Naye Naye pans are filled with water. In favourable rainy years, these pans undergo a brief but remarkable transformation, hosting a temporary explosion of life that attracts thousands of diverse bird species.

During the last bird count, participants also enjoyed significant elephant sightings, and a thrilling moment unfolded when wild dogs seized a warthog right in front of the birdwatchers. This program is a must if there has been substantial rainfall, typically from March to July, when the pans come alive with wildlife activity.

3 - Day Supplementary programme only after sufficient rains...

- * 3 nights at a rustic lodge near the Naye Naye pans.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

Remark:

Our specially equipped vehicles are designed with photographers in mind, featuring a lever roof and high-suspension for optimal visibility and comfort. With four-wheel drive capabilities, we navigate the challenging terrain of this wilderness, ensuring that our journey is akin to a constant expedition, offering you the best opportunities to capture stunning photographs.

The Naye Naye Pans in Bushmanland

Our journey continues eastward, leading us to Tsumkwe, the capital of Bushmanland. Over the next few days, our focus is on exploring the various pans within this natural and untouched wilderness, capturing hundreds of photographs of diverse water birds set against the backdrop of a captivating dry forest.

An exciting opportunity awaits as we also have the chance to visit the Bushmen, who are welcoming and open to being photographed by guests. The landscape is adorned with magnificent baobab trees, and if luck is on our side, we might spot the elusive leopard orchid in bloom.

While the elephant population in this area tends to be elusive, a stroke of luck could lead us to encounter wild dogs as we search for snipes. The journey promises a unique blend of natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural experiences.



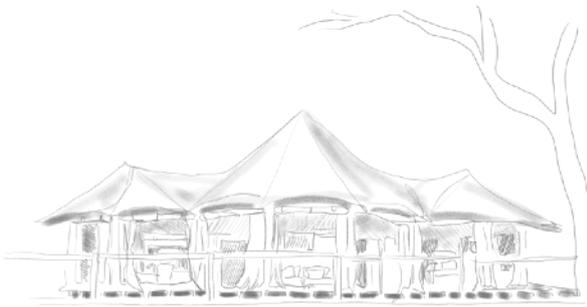
Day 10 & 11

overwhelming Avifauna...

- * 2 nights directly in the birder's paradise Shakawe, where the Okavango panhandle shows many sought-after species. (located in Botswana)

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- * Boat trip on the Okavango
- * Game drive in the Mahango or Bwabwata National Park.



Day 12 & 13

as from May you will see more mammals...

- * 2 nights near the famous Nambwa Lagoon close to the famous Horseshoe evening.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- * 1x Boatcruise on the Kwando
- * 1x Locally guided Drive to Horseshoe Bend



Kavango / Okavango

Our visit takes us to Mahango National Park, and despite its relatively modest size, this park boasts a wealth of wildlife. Here, you can expect to encounter the rare sable and roan antelopes, along with giraffes, elephants, lechwe, waterbuck, and reedbuck, all congregating along the banks of the Okavango River.

In the lodge's garden, keep an eye out for the Amethyst sunbird, Brown-, Jameson's-, and Red-billed Firefinches, White-browed Robin-Chat, and Meyer's Parrots.

We'll embark on flatboat excursions to explore further, seeking out the African Skimmer, Open-billed Stork, Rufous-bellied Heron, Green-backed Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, and numerous other new bird species. With a stroke of luck, we might even spot sought-after species like the Slaty Egret and White-backed Night-Heron. And don't forget the majestic Pel's Fishing Owl, which has been sighted in this area!

Our sightings have also included the exquisite Narina Trogon, making our journey through Mahango National Park a truly remarkable and rewarding experience.

Kwando in Caprivi Central, Bwabwata National Park

The Kwando/Linyanti/Liambezi alluvial river basin boasts wide reed belts, numerous lagoons, and expansive floodplains along the river's course, making it a gathering place for a diverse array of wildlife.

These waters are teeming with hippos, crocodiles, and Nile monitors. On the riverbanks, a robust population of various antelope species, striking Chapman zebras, buffalo, and countless elephants come to quench their thirst. During our exploration, we hope to spot the Racket-tailed Roller, various Oriole species, Glossy Ibis, the melodious Tinkling Cisticola, and, of course, the Chirping Cisticola, along with the Green-capped Eremomela and many other charming small birds. On early morning or late afternoon boat trips, depending on the guide's discretion, we anticipate sightings of the Lesser Jacana (in addition to the regular Jacana) and Allen's Gallinule. This humid region is also home to a fascinating array of bee-eaters and kingfishers. Keep an eye out for the Western Banded Snake Eagle, as it frequents this area and has been a common sighting for us. Lastly, I'm excited to introduce you to the captivating Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, and I look forward to sharing why it's such a beloved bird during our journey.

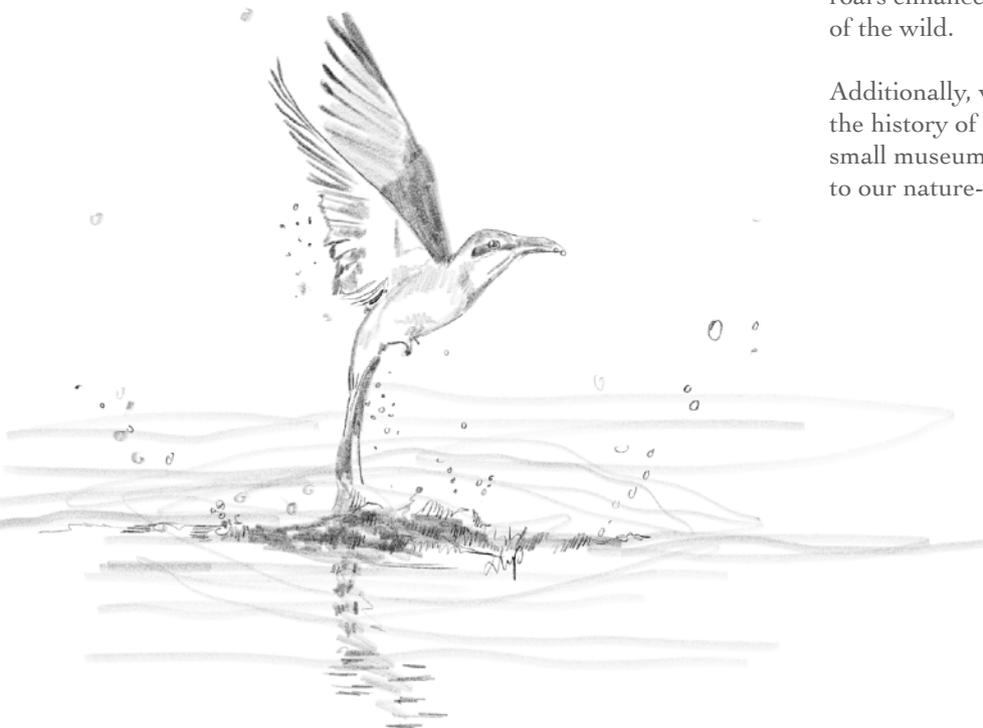
Day 14 & 15

das namibische Okavangodelta

- * 2 nights at a sensationally located wilderness lodge in Nkasa Rupara National Park.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- * 1x Locally guided Drive and Boat cruise to and on Linyanti



Day 16

birding overload

- * 1 overnight stay at a beautiful lodge directly on the banks of the mighty Zambezi River

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- * Boat cruise on the Zambezi

Black-bellied Bustard in Nkasa Rupara Park?

Early mornings in this area promise captivating encounters with various babbler, while during game drives, photographers eagerly hope to spot Black-bellied Bustards and even the elusive Yellow-throated Sandgrouse. On the boat trip, the African Fish Eagle is a common sight, but the Banded Snake Eagle remains a coveted target. If you've experienced the Okavango Delta before, you'd find it hard to believe you're anywhere other than this breathtaking natural wonder. The vast Linyanti floodplain showcases a picturesque African landscape adorned with termite mounds, grassy steppes, and small palm islands. While animal density may not be as high as in other areas, the sense of wilderness here is unparalleled. Magnificent sunsets and distant lion roars enhance the feeling of being in the true heart of the wild.

Additionally, we have the opportunity to explore the history of David Livingstone by visiting a small museum, adding a touch of cultural richness to our nature-focused journey.

Zambezi

The Zambezi River, with its numerous divisions into long linear islands and tributaries, has seen its wildlife somewhat diminished due to the dense Lozi population in the area. However, on a boat trip, you'll have fantastic photo opportunities to capture various turacos and water birds. These include the rare African Finfoot, Half-collared Kingfisher, Slaty Egret, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Eastern Nicator, Lesser Jacana, and a variety of bee-eaters.

Of particular note is the Southern Carmine Bee-eater, which breeds along the Zambezi's banks from August onwards. Witnessing this ornithological marvel is a must-see experience.

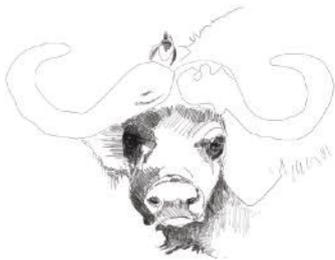
Day 17, 18 & 19

... find the Longclaw

- * 3 nights on the Kasika "Floodplain" directly opposite Sedudu Island, which is heavily populated with buffalo.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- * Here the game drives are done by boat. The flat aluminium boats are very comfortable (you also have a lot of space) and are very stable and quiet, so they are great for wildlife viewing and photography.



Day 20

rainforest... spray-forest

- * 1 overnight stay near Vic Falls at a beautiful lodge.

inclusive:

- * Bed & Breakfast (dinner a la carte in the restaurant not included)
- * Transfer to Hotel & to the airport

not inclusive:

- * US\$ 50.- for visa and US\$ 50.- entrance fee to the falls (please bring separately)



Chobe National Park, Kasika in Caprivi East

Our journey leads us to the Chobe River, a remarkable meeting point of Namibia, Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, offering one of Africa's densest wildlife populations. Each year, the Chobe River floods numerous shallow islands, creating a thriving ecosystem with an abundance of food.

As we explore this region, we'll encounter numerous elephants lining the riverbanks, and if we're lucky, we might even witness them swimming—a fantastic opportunity for photographers. The flat islands are grazed by buffalo, impala, the rare grass antelope known as the "Puku," and Waterbuck. Lying Nile crocodiles can be seen on the shores, occasionally coming quite close.

During our boat cruise, flocks of Open-billed Storks, Whistling Ducks, Spur-winged Geese, and Pratincoles will pass overhead. Slaty Egrets will grace us with their presence along the shore, and the remarkable Black Heron will impress with its unique fishing technique of forming its wings into a bell shape. Kingfisher enthusiasts can rest assured that there will be ample opportunities for photography.

Victoria Falls and the unique spray rainforest biotope at the falls

In 1855, David Livingstone described this area in awe: "The whole scene was extremely beautiful; the banks and islands dotted over the river are adorned with sylvan vegetation of great variety of colour and form...no one can imagine the beauty of the view from anything witnessed in England. It had never been seen before by European eyes; but scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight."

Here, an imposing bank at Victoria Falls is adorned with a dense forest of Cape figs, ferns, water pears, and majestic baobabs. Trumpeter Hornbills indulge in the lush figs and berries, while the vibrant Schalow's Turaco, with its striking red wings, calls out in a thrilling manner. Hidden away in the undergrowth, the Thrush Nightingale swims in secrecy, and the Bronze Mannikin flits among the ferns.

With over 470 bird species recorded in this area, it stands as a hotspot for nature enthusiasts. Additionally, Zimbabwe is home to many talented artists, and you're likely to come across some remarkable artworks or engage with fascinating individuals during your visit.



Day 21

Home sweet home

inclusive:

- * Transfers to the chosen airport, as well as further transfers to accommodation or international airports.

Inclusions:

- * Transportation in a travel- and safari-friendly four-wheel-drive Toyota Land Cruiser.
- * Transfers as outlined in the itinerary.
- * Guaranteed window or single seat for each participant.
- * Accommodation and meals as specified in the itinerary.
- * Scheduled activities as per the itinerary.
- * All entrance fees to National Parks and attractions as outlined in the itinerary.
- * An experienced trilingual tour guide proficient in English, German, and Afrikaans.
- * Guided tours conducted in English, with the option for the guide to communicate in German and Afrikaans.
- * Complimentary drinking water provided in the vehicle.

Exclusions:

- * Personal expenses
- * Beverages and gratuities
- * International & regional flights
- * Visa Expenses

2024 Indicative Rates

Participants per vehicle	per Person
1 Person	\$ 20.520,00
2 Persons	\$ 13.443,00
3 Persons	\$ 11.084,00
4 Persons	\$ 9.905,00
5 Persons	\$ 9.197,00
6 Persons	\$ 8.725,00
7 Persons	\$ 8.388,00
Single Room	\$ 1.388,00

Flight logistics in Africa

Victoria Falls Airport offers connectivity to a diverse range of airports. For international travellers, we recommend considering connecting flights via Johannesburg, Cape Town, or Windhoek for a smooth and convenient journey.

An OFFER, specially for you...

- * You should get exactly what you want, tailor-made!
- * We will gladly send you this trip with exact accommodation details and would adjust them to your needs any time

Recommended upgrades

- * Just let us know where and which upgrades you prefer and we will send you the calculation

Too expensive, extensive or changes desired?

- * We can shorten trip to suit your area of interest
- * Offer you the trip as a self-drive trip; you can then use the local guides
- * Choose cheaper accommodation or cheaper rooms at the lodges

Contact with Namibia

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