

Guided birding trip with natural history specialities

Namib, Etoscha, Okavango, Chobe to Victoria Falls:

„Avifauna Namib to Zambezi 2024“



Surely no child, and few adults, have ever watched a bird in flight without envy.

— Isaac Asimov

Overview

All the diverse habitats encountered on this safari showcase a rich variety of birds, small animals, well-known African mammals, and impressive flora. This trip can be described as both ornithological and photographic because the dedicated search for birds, patient observation in areas of animal concentration, and the shared love for nature create excellent photographic opportunities.

This journey takes you through the various biomes of Namibia:

The acacia savannah of the central Khomas Highlands.

The dunes and expansive lichen fields of the Namib Desert.

The Atlantic Ocean, sandy beaches, and the tidal flats of the Walvis Bay Lagoon, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The granite outcrops and volcanic formations of the Spitzkoppe and Erongo, a haven for endemic species.

Etosha National Park with its Mopane savannah, natural springs, Tamboti forests, and saltbush plains.

The jackalberry and Manketti nut tree forests, papyrus-lined wetlands, lagoons, and floodplains of the Okavango, Zambezi, and Chobe, offering a diversity of flora and fauna rarely found in any other African country.

Victoria Falls, a small rainforest filled with surprises.

This journey through Namibia's varied ecosystems ensures that you will not only see a wide range of species but also experience extraordinary photographic moments along the way.

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 2.9.2024

- * 1 night at the Swakop Dry River on a high-quality lodge nestled among tall camel thorn acacias, situated between the Otjihavera Mountains and their slate formations.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, bed & Breakfast



Day 2 3.9.2024

- * Enjoy a one-night stay at a captivating lodge boasting remarkable architecture and breathtaking vistas of the Namib Desert and the mesmerizing erosion valleys of Gaub Canyon.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, bed & Breakfast

Birding in the Acacia Forest of the Swakop River

Upon your arrival at the airport, we waste no time in immersing you in the natural beauty of Namibia. Depending on the season, a visit to a nearby reservoir could be on the agenda to observe the rare cliff swallow if you're traveling in the summer.

As you settle into the lodge, the tree-filled surroundings offer a delightful introduction to the local birdlife. Here, you can expect to encounter the lively Red-billed Buffalo Weavers and the colourful Rosy-faced Lovebirds. Watch as Palm Swifts gracefully swoop down from the palm trees, and keep an eye out for Bradfield's Swifts, which can often be seen alongside other swallows and swifts.

We'll embark on a walk through the nearby cliffs, where we hope to spot the Orange River Francolin, and, if we're fortunate, the Hartlaub's Francolin. This is also the perfect opportunity to glimpse the first of our near-endemic species: the Rockrunner (Damara Rockjumper) and Rüppell's Parrot. We'll scan the tall trees to spot the majestic Verreaux's Eagle-Owl.

This initial birdwatching adventure sets the stage for an exciting and rewarding journey through Namibia's diverse birdlife and natural landscapes.

The Dune Lark and its relatives

In the acacia savannah of the Namibian plateau, our exploration reveals not only some African mammals but also the semi-endemic Monteiro's Hornbill, various Cisticola species, and the familiar Crimson-breasted Shrike, well-known throughout Africa. Our birdwatching checklist grows with additions like Bradfield's Swift, Ashy Tit, Black-faced, Violet-eared, and Common Waxbill, Stark's Lark, Short-toed Rock Thrush, Barred Wren-Warbler, and possibly the Orange River Francolin.

As we journey over the western Escarpment, breathtaking vistas unfold before us. Along the way, we pause to investigate the impressive Sociable Weaver nests, as Pygmy Falcons often play the role of nest-busters here. With a bit of luck, we may spot Cinnamon-breasted Warblers amid the granite formations of the Western Escarpment.

The Dune Lark, Namibia's sole true endemic bird species, awaits as a wonderful focal point for observation. It's not just the captivating rust-red, brown, and orange hues of this bird that fascinate, but also the awe-inspiring landscape it calls home — a true delight for nature enthusiasts.

Days 3 & 4 4 & 5.9.2024

- * 2 nights in a small, simply designed hotel with a North Sea character.

inclusive:

- * Bed & Breakfast (Dinner a la carte in Restaurant, not inclusive)



Days 5 & 6 6 & 7.9.2024

- * 2 nights in the midst of the northern Erongo at an idyllically located high-quality bush camp or bush lodge, where you often have the endemic bird species right outside your doorstep.

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed & Breakfast



Through the Oldest Desert to the Atlantic...

The Namibian coast presents a rich array of diverse habitats for birdwatchers, provided you know how to navigate them effectively. We traverse the seemingly lifeless gravel plains of the Namib in search of the long-tailed Eremomela, Rufous-eared Warbler, and Gray's Lark. Who would have imagined encountering a plant almost as ancient as the Ginkgo biloba, first discovered by an Austrian named Welwitsch in 1859? Amid the dunes of Kuiseb, we set out to find the somewhat lighter-hued version of the endemic Dune Lark and Gray's Lark, alongside the Trac Trac Chat. The Walvis Bay Lagoon offers a diverse array of wading birds, which can be enjoyed to the fullest during the summer months, from October to March. We are well-acquainted with the west side and secret paths that promise excellent sightings of the Damara Tern, various other terns, and of course, numerous sandpipers, ducks, and literally thousands of Flamingos. In Swakopmund, you can savour a good coffee under the palm trees, photograph the Orange River White-eye, and explore well-stocked bookshops for ornithological literature.

Spitzkoppe & Erongo

While spotting the Herero Chat may be more challenging, the region it inhabits offers a breathtaking birding, geological, and photographic experience. The Spitzkoppe, also known as Bushman's Paradise, presents numerous opportunities for birdwatching. Klipspringers gracefully scale the rock faces, and the granite terrain is adorned with thick-stemmed "Elephant's Foot" trees. Among our target bird species, in addition to the commonly seen Short-toed Rock-Thrush and Mountain Wheatear, are the schlegelii subspecies of the Karoo Chat, Layard's Warbler, and the Black-backed Puffback with its striking red eye.

On well-established trails tucked away in the remote corners of a private farm in the Erongo region, we've uncovered small bird paradises where we'd love to join you in seeking out some of the more elusive bird species. Even before dusk settles in, we tune our ears to the calls of the hardy Hartlaub Francolin, capturing photographs of Rockrunners alongside Cape- and Cinnamon-breasted Buntings, the vocal Mountain Wheatear, and the Bokmakierie.

Days 7, 8 & 9
8, 9 & 10.9.2024

- * 1 overnight stay at a good lodge near Andersson Gate, which is the southern central gate to Etosha National Park.
- * 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.



Days 10, 11 & 12
11, 12 & 13.9.2024

- * 1 overnight stay on a nice lodge near Mahango National Park in Namibia.
- * 2 nights at a beautiful lodge directly in the birder's paradise Shakawe, where the Okavango panhandle shows many sought-after species. (located in Botswana)

inclusive:

- * Dinner, Bed and breakfast
- * Boat trips on the Okavango
- * Game drive into Mahango or Bwabwata National Park.



Etosha Nationalpark



Etosha National Park, often referred to as the "Great White Place," spans over 22,000 square kilometres 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.

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.

Day 13
14.9.2024

- * 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

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.



Days 14 & 15
15 & 16.9.2024

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

inclusive:

- * All Meals
- * 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.

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.

Day 16
17.9.2024

- * 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)

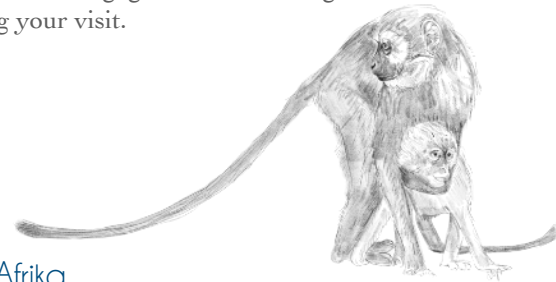


Victoria Falls and the unique spray rainforest biotope at the falls

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 17
Wednesday, 18.9.2024

inclusive:

- * Transfers auf den gewählten Flughafen, sowie weitere Transfers auf Unterkünfte oder internationale Flughäfen.

Fluglogistik in Afrika

Victoria Falls Airport provides connectivity to a wide array of airports. For international travellers, we recommend exploring connecting flights through Johannesburg, Cape Town, or Windhoek to ensure a seamless and convenient journey.



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 per Person

Bei einer Beteiligung von:

- * 2 Persons: \$ 10.816,-
- * 3 Persons: \$ 8.572,-
- * 4 Persons: \$ 7401,-
- * 5 Persons: \$ 6.995,-
- * 6 -7 Persons: \$ 6.695,-

- * Single supplement: \$ 1.300,-

Contact

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