

info@naturetravelbirding.com
www.naturetravelbirding.com



Namibia Endemics Safari

13 DAY/ 12 NIGHT SAFARI

OVERVIEW

On this birding safari we will try and find Namibia's only true endemic and all the near endemics in the country. During our safari we will cover most of central Namibia, the central Coastline, Etosha National Park as well as Kaokoland and the Kunene River.

Our safari will start in the capital, Windhoek and from there we continue through the Namib Desert and the coastal town of Walvis Bay and Swakopmund which are known for the high concentration of waders.

Then we move north to the Erongo Mountains and Damaraland before going all the way to Namibia's northern border with Angola, the Kunene River for some localised birding specials. From here we head for Namibia's most famous national park, Etosha before we finish the safari off in the scenic Waterberg Plateau National Park. Besides the brilliant birding opportunities we will enjoy great game viewing and great scenery in one of the most beautiful countries on earth.

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Windhoek and surrounds
DAY 2	The Namib Desert and the coast
DAY 3	Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and its waders
DAY 4	Herero Chat, Spitzkoppe and the Brandberg
DAY 5	Damaraland and the Huab River
DAY 6	The Kunene River
DAY 7	The Kunene River
DAY 8	Dolomite and Western Etosha National Park
DAY 9	Okakuejo and Etosha National Park
DAY 10	Central Etosha National Park

DAY 11	Eastern Etosha National Park
DAY 12	Waterberg Plateau National Park
DAY 13	Windhoek International Airport or onto one of the birding safari extensions

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Windhoek and surrounds

Depending on what time your flight arrives at Windhoek International Airport we hope to spend a few hours birding around Avis just outside Windhoek. This great birding spot is known to produce sightings of Rockrunner, Monteiro's Hornbill, Barred Wren-warbler, Rock Kestrel, White-tailed Shrike, Carp's Black Tit, Bradfield's Swift, Violet-eared Waxbill, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Acacia Pied Barbet, Southern Red Bishop, Orange River Francolin, Alpine Swift, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Cape Penduline tit, Crimson-breasted Shrike and Black-faced Waxbill.

We will have our welcome dinner at one of the famous restaurants in Windhoek and stay in a comfortable guesthouse.

DAY 2: The Namib Desert and the coast

With an early start we will bird in Daan Viljoen Game Reserve not far from Windhoek where we hope to find Orange-river francolin, Long-billed Pipit, Monteiro's Hornbill, Rockrunner, Damara Hornbill, Black Cuckoo, Diderick Cuckoo, White-backed Mousebird, Mountain Wheatear, Pirit Batis, Cape Penduline Tit, Red-headed Finch, Shaft-tailed Whydah, White-rumped Swift, Red-breasted and Greater Striped Swallow, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler, Short-toed Rock-thrush, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Ashy Tit, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting and Black-throated Canary. The reserve also contains good numbers of Hartmann's Mountain Zebra, Oryx, Springbok, Kudu, Klipspringer, Steenbok, Giraffe and Eland. We have even spotted Leopard here on a previous trip.

From here we make our way down the escarpment and across the desert plains keeping an eye out for Karoo Korhaan, Double-banded Courser, Tractrac Chat, Stark's Lark, Lark-like Bunting, Ludwig's Bustard, Black-chested Snake-eagle, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Lappet-faced Vulture, Greater Kestrel, Crimson-breasted Shrike and Common Ostrich. We should arrive at our Guesthouse in Swakopmund by late afternoon and we will enjoy a well-deserved dinner in one of the well-known seafood restaurants in town.

DAY 3: Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and its waders

We will be up early as we spend the first few hours of the day in Namib Desert looking for Namibia's true endemic, the Dune Lark. After enjoying the larks against the beautiful sand dunes as a background we will make our way to Walvis Bay to spend of the morning enjoying some of the best wader watching in Southern Africa. The tidal lagoon holds great numbers of Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, Pied Avocet, Greater and Lesser Flamingo, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Grey Plover, White-fronted Plover, Sandwich Tern, Common Tern, Swift Tern, Caspian tern and Black-necked Grebe. Common Ringed Plover, Chestnut-banded Plover, Ruff, Damara Tern, African Black Oystercatcher, Whimbrel and Black-winged Stilts are present in good numbers as well. This area has produced a lot of rarities over the last few years including Common Redshank, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Red-necked Phalarope, Terek Sandpiper, Pacific and American Golden Plovers and Pectoral Sandpiper.

After lunch we will spend the afternoon around the salt works and gravel plains just north of Swakopmund looking to find Damara Tern, Gray's Lark, Tractrac Chat and general shorebirds like Cape, Crested and White-breasted Cormorants, Hartlaub's and Kelp Gull. Orange River White-eye is fairly common in the town gardens and we will keep an eye open for them. We will again stay in the same guesthouse.

DAY 4: Herero Chat, Spitzkoppe and the Brandberg

Today will find us on the road very early to ensure that we arrive at the Spitzkoppe Mountains around first light as early morning is the best time to look for the most difficult to find of Namibia's near endemic birds, the Herero Chat. Other interesting birds that we can find around here include Karoo Long-billed Lark, Karoo Korhaan, Layard's Tit-babbler, Verreaux's Eagle, Augur Buzzard, Great Sparrow, Chat Flycatcher, White-tailed Shrike, Rock Kestrel, Bokmakierie, Cinnamon-breasted and Cape Bunting, Damara Hornbill, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Carp's Black Tit, Pale-winged Starling and White-throated Canary.

From here we will make our way to the Brandberg, Namibia's highest mountain. The surrounding plains are home to Burchell's and Double-banded Courser, Ruppell's Korhaan and Benguela Long-billed Lark. We should arrive at our lodge situated on the Huab River by late afternoon and we will spend the next two nights here. We will be welcomed by Olive Bee-eater which nests around the lodge. After dinner we will look for Southern White-faced Scops-owl, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Freckled and Rufous-cheeked Nightjars. The Desert adapted Elephants of Damaraland often visit the water points and we might be lucky enough to encounter them during our stay in this beautiful part of the country.

DAY 5: Damaraland and the Huab River

After a quick cup of coffee we will depart with first light to try and locate the elusive Hartlaub's Spurfowl. They tend to call from the top of boulders very early in morning after which it becomes increasingly difficult to see them. We should encounter Rockrunner as they inhabit the same rocky environment as the Spurfowl. We will return to the lodge for breakfast while keeping an eye open for Bare-cheeked Babblers as they are often seen around the lodge. There are several Rock Pythons that live around the main lounge area and we might see one sunning itself early in the morning.

From here we will use the rest of the day to explore the Huab River and surrounding Mopane Woodland which is home to several of the Namibian near endemics. We will try and find Violet Woodhoopoe, Ruppel's Parrot, Carp's Black Tit, Damara Hornbill and White-tailed Shrike. Other interesting birds in the area include Rosy-faced Lovebirds, Short-toed Rock-thrush, Bearded, Cardinal and Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Purple Roller, White-backed Mousebird, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Groundscraper Thrush, Familiar Chat, Double-banded and Namaqua Sandgrouse, Yellow-bellied Eremomela and Great Spotted Cuckoo. Raptors are present in good numbers and we hope to see Verreaux's Eagle, Augur Buzzard, Shikra, Gabar Goshawk and Pygmy Falcon.

Besides the Desert Elephants we might see Oryx, Springbok, Kudu, Klipspringer, Rock Hyrax, Warthog, Baboon and Black-backed Jackal.

DAY 6: The Kunene River

After a quick birding walk and breakfast we will start making our way up to the remote Kaokoland in the North-western part of Namibia. We will base ourselves at Kunene River Lodge situated on the Kunene River. This is the perfect base from which to explore the surrounding area for the main birding specials: Cinderella Waxbill, Rufous-tailed Palm-thrush, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Red-necked Spurfowl, Angola Cave Chat and Grey Kestrel.

We should arrive by late afternoon and a quick birding walk around the lodge gardens and riverfront should produce sightings of Meve's Starling, Rufous-tailed Palm-thrush, Woodland Kingfisher, Olive Bee-eater, Red-billed Spurfowl, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, African Paradise Flycatcher and Black-backed Puffback. We will enjoy dinner while overlooking the beautiful Kunene River hoping to see Bat Hawk hunting over the river. After dinner we will look for Pearl-spotted Owlet, Verreaux's Eagle-owl, Freckled and Rufous-cheeked Nightjars.

DAY 7: The Kunene River

We will start with a morning birding walk along the river looking for Bare-cheeked Babbler, Woodland, Grey-headed and Brown-hooded Kingfisher, White-browed Coucal, White-tailed Shrike, Red-necked Spurfowl (afer subspecies), capricorni subspecies of Bennett's Woodpecker, Carp's Black Tit, Monteiro's Hornbill, African Golden Oriole, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, Swamp Boubou, Violet-backed Starling, Common Scimitarbill, Yellow-billed Oxpecker and Ashy Flycatcher.

By late morning we will make our way up one of the small riverbed valleys to look for our main target bird, Cinderella Waxbill. They tend to go out feeding early in the morning before returning to have drink and then spend some time relaxing in one of the thickets in the valley. And this is where we hope to find a few of them. By late afternoon we will depart for a boat cruise on the Kunene River looking for Goliath, Green-backed and Purple Heron, Olive and White-fronted Bee-eater, Giant and Pied Kingfisher, Black Crake, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Swamp Boubou, Black-crowned Night-heron and White-browed Coucal. White-backed Night-heron, Slaty Egret and Saddle-billed Stork have been recorded here before. Depending on recent sightings we might opt for an earlier cruise to allow ourselves enough time to look for Grey Kestrel around dusk at one of its favourite roosting spots.

NOTE: Angola Cave Chats were recently discovered in the Zebra Mountains not far from the lodge and although we don't include a trip to see them this can be arranged for those interested in seeing them. It will require an early start and a fairly steep climb to see them. Please let us know in advance if you might be interested but we will have to assess the road conditions as recent rain will make the track leading to the mountains inaccessible.

DAY 8: Dolomite and Western Etosha National Park

After a quick birding walk looking for any specials that we might have missed yesterday and breakfast we will make our way back south again towards Dolomite Camp in the recently opened western section of Etosha National Park. We will be on the lookout for raptors commonly seen in the Kunene River area which include African Hawk-eagle, Martial and Verreaux's Eagle, Shikra, Gabar Goshawk, Rock Kestrel, Little Sparrowhawk, Pale Chanting Goshawk, African Harrier-hawk, Augur and Steppe Buzzard and Booted Eagle.

We hope to arrive at the Galton entrance gate to Etosha by early to mid-afternoon which will give a few hours of birding and game viewing along the way to camp. Commonly seen birds in the area include Ostrich, Lark-like Bunting, Stark's, Sabota and Eastern Clapper Lark, Common Scimitarbill, Kalahari Scrub-robin, Violet-eared Waxbill,

Bradfield's and Common Swift, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Burchell's Courser, Monteiro's and Yellow-billed Hornbill, Grey-backed Sparrow-lark, Carp's Black Tit, Greater Striped Swallow, Anteating Chat, Desert and Rattling Cisticola, Brown-crowned Tchagra and Scaly-feathered Finch.

Game viewing is normally pretty good in this area with good numbers of Hartmann's and Burchell's Zebra, Red Hartebeest, Oryx, Springbok, Kudu, Klipspringer, Elephant, Black Rhino and Lion.

DAY 9: Okakuejo and Etosha National Park

We will be up before the sun this morning to scan the rocky outcrop on which the camp is built for Hartlaub's Spurfowl. Rock Martin, Carp's Black Tit, Eastern Clapper Lark, Black-faced Waxbill, Black-throated Canary and Lanner Falcon are often seen around the lodge. After breakfast we will continue our journey eastward through the park and depending on the amount of birding and game viewing along the way we plan to be in the park and Okakuejo Resort, our lodge for tonight by mid-afternoon. The resort grounds is a very productive birding spot and we hope to find African Pygmy Falcon, Acacia Pied Barbet, Barred Wren-warbler, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Long-billed Crombec, Dusky and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Rock Martin, Little Swift, Marico and Chat Flycatcher, Common House Martin, White-throated Canary, Shaft-tailed Whydah, Yellow-billed, Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills, Green-winged Pytilia, Bearded, Cardinal and Golden-tailed Woodpeckers while Lanner Falcon often hunts around the waterhole and there are huge Sociable Weaver nests all over.

The floodlit waterhole at the edge of the camp is very productive at night, both in terms of birds and other wildlife. Double-banded Sandgrouse drink about 25 minutes after sunset and we will keep an eye open for Pearl-spotted Owlet, Verreaux's Eagle-owl, Fiery-necked and Rufous-cheeked Nightjars. Elephant, Black Rhino, Spotted Hyena and Lion are regular visitors to the waterhole at night.

DAY 10: Central Etosha National Park

With an early start we will out on the plains surrounding Okakuejo where we hope to find Spike-heeled, Sabota, Pink-billed, Red-capped, Rufous-naped, Fawn-collared and Eastern Clapper Larks, Grey-backed Sparrow-lark, Capped Wheatear, Desert Cisticola, Rufous-eared Warbler, Northern Black Korhaan, Kori Bustard, Lark-like Bunting, Double-banded Courser, Secretary Bird, Ostrich, Namaqua and Burchell's Sandgrouse and Red-billed Quelea. Greater Kestrel, Red-necked and Peregrine Falcon are present in good numbers as well. The plains are also home to big herds of Oryx, Blue Wildebeest, Zebra, Springbok, Red Hartebeest and their predators are never far behind.

As we make our way to Halali the plains give way to scrub we will start seeing Monotonous Lark, Kalahari Scrub-robin, Lesser Grey and Red-backed Shrike, Common

Fiscal, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Spotted Flycatcher, Great Sparrow, Yellow Canary, Violet-eared and Blue Waxbills while Grey-Go-Away Bird, Lilac-breasted Roller and Cape Turtle Doves are always present in big numbers. Halali Camp is situated in Mopane Woodland and is an excellent place to see Bare-cheeked Babbler, Violet Woodhoopoe, Carp's Black Tit, Southern White-crowned Shrike, Southern White-faced Scops Owl, Scops Owl and Barn Owl. Elephant, Black Rhino and Leopard are often seen at the floodlit waterhole while Honey Badgers visit the camp almost every night.

DAY 11: Eastern Etosha National Park

Today we will slowly make our way towards the eastern section with bigger areas of woodland. We hope to find Blue Crane, Black-faced and Bare-cheeked Babblers, Emerald-spotted Wood-dove, Temminck's Courser and Chat Flycatcher along the way. Etosha is brilliant for raptors and we should see Martial and Tawny Eagle, Bateleur, Black-chested and Brown Snake-eagles, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Yellow-billed Kite, Black-shouldered Kite, Greater Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Steppe Buzzard, Gabar Goshawk, African Harrier-hawk, Red-footed Falcon and Eurasian Hobby during our three night stay. Lappet-faced, White-backed, Cape, White-headed and Hooded Vultures are present in impressive numbers as well.

If the Etosha pan is full of water it is transformed into a water bird spectacle with huge numbers of Great White Pelican, Lesser and Greater Flamingos, Caspian Plover, Red-billed and Cape Teals, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilts, Black-necked and Great Crested Grebes. As with Walvis Bay any number of rarities might be present. We will stay at a lodge just outside the park. It is surrounded by great Acacia Bushveld perfect for picking up any of the specials that we have missed.

DAY 12: Waterberg Plateau National Park

We will start today with a birding walk around the lodge gardens and after breakfast we will make our way south towards our destination for tonight, the Waterberg Plateau National Park. Our resort is situated below the beautiful sandstone cliffs and this area is hotspot for a number of Namibian specials and endemics which will give the perfect opportunity to catch up on any of the endemics that we might have missed on the trip.

Some of the birding specials found here include Ruppell's Parrot, Damara and Bradfield's Hornbill, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Carp's Black Tit, Rockrunner, Violet-eared Waxbill, Red-billed Spurfowl, Short-toed Rock-thrush, Cape Vulture, Freckled Nightjar, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Black-faced Waxbill, Ashy Tit, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Black and Brown-crowned Tchagra, Cinnamon-breasted, Golden-breasted and Cape Bunting, Pririt Batis, Green-winged Pytilia, White-tailed Shrike, Martial and Tawny Eagle, Little Sparrowhawk and African Hawk-eagle to name a few.

We can look at another option of staying at a Private Game Reserve with great general bushveld birding and brilliant game viewing. The rare yellow form of the Crimson-breasted Shrike has been seen in the area of the private reserve. This is a great option if you would like to treat yourselves on the final evening. Please enquire about more information on this option.

DAY 13: Windhoek International Airport or onto one of the birding safari extensions

After an early morning birding walk looking for any birds we might have missed and breakfast we will depart for Windhoek as our safari come to an end. Please do not book your flights before 14h00 to allow us enough time to get you to the airport. Another option this morning will be to do a guided game drive on top of the Plateau which will be the only opportunity to see Cape Buffalo on this safari. Other game that might be seen include Damara Dik-dik, Black and White Rhino, Giraffe, Eland, Roan and Sable Antelope, Leopard and Cheetah. The game drive is not included in the price as it is an optional extra activity.

Please contact us for extension options.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.