

info@naturetravelbirding.com
www.naturetravelbirding.com



Namibia, Botswana and Zambia Birding Safari

13 DAY/ 14 NIGHT SAFARI

OVERVIEW

This wonderful birding itinerary offers some of the best birding in Southern Africa.

Besides covering most of central Namibia and finding the endemics and near endemic birds we will also cover the tropical woodlands of the Caprivi/Zambezi strip where our focus will be on finding the Okavango Specials.

We will start off in Victoria Falls where we will spend two days birding the Riverine Forest and Miombo Woodland as well as visit the mighty Victoria Falls. From here we cross over into the Caprivi Strip of Namibia where we will focus on finding all the regional Okavango Specials that include the magnificent Pel's Fishing-owl.

From here we will spend a couple of days in Etosha enjoying the great birding and game viewing that this park offers. We will look for all the Namibian near-endemics along the western escarpment before finishing off along the coast where we will look for Dune Lark, Namibia's endemic.

DAILY SUMMARY

| | |
|-------|--|
| DAY 1 | Livingstone and the Victoria Falls |
| DAY 2 | Victoria Falls and the Zambezi River |
| DAY 3 | Eastern Caprivi |
| DAY 4 | The Zambezi Floodplains and the Okavango River |
| DAY 5 | The Okavango |
| DAY 6 | The Caprivi Broadleaf Woodland |
| DAY 7 | Eastern Etosha National Park |
| DAY 8 | Central Etosha National Park |
| DAY 9 | The Okaukuejo area of Etosha National Park |

| | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| DAY 10 | Western Etosha and Damaraland |
| DAY 11 | Damaraland |
| DAY 12 | The Erongo Mountains |
| DAY 13 | Walvis Bay and the coast |
| DAY 14 | Dune Lark and departure |

DETAILED DAILY ITENIRARY

DAY 1: Livingstone and the Victoria Falls

After meeting you at Livingstone International Airport we will make our way to our lodge situated on the banks of the Zambezi River where we will spend the next two nights.

After settling in we will start our birding with a birding walk around the lodge where we will look for Collared Palm-thrush, Red-faced Cisticola, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Orange-breasted Bush-shrike, African Yellow White-eye, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Eastern Bearded Scrub-robin, Holub's Golden Weaver, Arrow-marked Babbler, White-browed Coucal, African Emerald, Jacobin, Red-chested, Levailant's, Klaas's and Diderick Cuckoo. We will enjoy a sun-downer drink and welcome dinner listening to the wildlife that live along the Zambezi.

🏠 **Accommodation: Camp Nkwazi on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis**

DAY 2: Victoria Falls and the Zambezi River

We will enjoy a cup of coffee scanning the river hoping to see the resident African Finfoot pair before making our way to Victoria Falls where we will spend the morning enjoying one of the natural wonders of the world and birding in the Riverine Woodland around the falls.

Some of the birds we hope to see include Schalow's Turaco, Trumpeter Hornbill, White-browed Robin-chat, Red-winged Starling, Terrestrial Brownbul, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Rock Martin and a variety of water birds. If time allows we might visit the local water treatment works where species like African Rail, African Purple Swamphen, Orange-breasted Waxbill and several raptors might be seen.

We will also enjoy a late afternoon boat cruise on the Zambezi River where we hope to see African Skimmer, Rufous-bellied Heron, African Finfoot, Western Banded Snake-eagle, Half-collared, Malachite, Pied and Giant Kingfishers.

🏠 **Accommodation: Camp Nkwazi on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis**

DAY 3: Eastern Caprivi

We will start with a pre breakfast birding walk in the Miombo Woodland close to the lodge where we might see Miombo Rock-thrush, Racket-tailed Roller, Miombo Pied Barbet, Retz and White-crested Helmet-shrikes, Striped Kingfisher, Kurrichane Thrush, Lizzard Buzzard and a variety of woodland birds before returning for breakfast.

From here we will make our way to the Namibian border where we will cross close to Katima Mulilo with several birding stops along the way. Depending on the time of the year we could arrange to drive to the Muchile Important Bird Area to look for the localised Black-cheeked Lovebird. Other birds found in the Mopane Woodland are Arnott's Chat, Bennett's Woodpecker, Meve's Starling and Southern Ground Hornbill.

Our lunch stop in Katima might produce Northern Grey-headed Sparrow and Bronze Mannikin and we will finish off the day at the spectacular Southern Carmine Bee-eater colony close to our lodge.

🏠 Accommodation: Caprivi Mutoya on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis

DAY 4: The Zambezi Floodplains and the Okavango River

After a cup of coffee enjoying the Wire-tailed, Lesser Striped, Grey-rumped Swallows, Brown-throated and Banded Martins flying over the river we will depart for a pre breakfast birding between the various lily-covered pans and Zambezi Floodplain.

Our key specials here include Lesser Jacana, African Pygmy Geese, White-backed Duck, Slaty Egret, Rosy-throated Longclaw, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Saddle-billed Stork, Black Heron, Rufous-bellied Heron, White-crowned Lapwing and even Black Coucal if we are very lucky. After breakfast we will embark for lengthy drive across the Caprivi Strip to the Botswana border and to our lodge with a beautiful setting on the Okavango River.

Before crossing we will first stop at a well-known stake-out for Rock Pratincole. If time allows we will enjoy the variety of the resident birds in the garden that include Hartlaub's Babbler, Southern Brown-throated Weaver, Green Woodhoopoe, Golden-tailed Woodpecker and Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird while African Wood and African Barred Owlet are often seen here as well.

🏠 Accommodation: Xaro Lodge on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis

DAY 5: The Okavango

We will start off with a morning walk in the Riverine Forest where we will try to find Narina Trogon, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Grey-headed Buh-shrike, Bradfield's Hornbill, Swamp Boubou, Brubru, Black-backed Puffback, Bennett's, Golden-tailed, Cardinal and Bearded

Woodpecker. After breakfast we will depart for a boat cruise on the Okavango River which will be one of the highlights of the trip.

Our main targets here will be Pel's Fishing-owl, White-backed Night-heron, Luapula Cisticola, Chirping Cisticola, Greater Swamp Warbler, Little Rush Warbler, Little Bittern, Allen's Gallinule and Purple Heron with the more common birds being Squacco Heron, Grey Heron, Tawny-flanked Prinia, White-winged Tern, Hamerkop, African Openbill, African Fish-eagle, African Marsh Harrier and Village Weaver.

Our afternoon will be dedicated to explore the productive Mahangu National Park which offers an incredible number of species for a small park. We hope to see Wattled Crane, Long-toed Lapwing, Slaty Egret, Collared Pratincole, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Violet-eared Waxbill, Verreaux's Eagle-owl, Crested Francolin, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Greater and Lesser Honeyguide, Long-billed Crombec, Grey-tit Flycatcher, Broad-billed Roller, African Cuckoo-hawk, Ayre's Hawk-eagle and smaller raptors like Lizzard Buzzard, Little Sparrowhawk, Ovambo Sparrowhawk and Shikra. Mahangu offers excellent game viewing as well and we hope to see Sable, Roan, Tsessebe, Elephant, Buffalo, Hippo, red Lechwe, Kudu, Impala and even Lion or Leopard if we are lucky.

We will check in to our lodge situated on the banks of the Okavango River overlooking Bwabwata National Park just before sunset.

🏠 Accommodation: Mahangu Safari Lodge on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis

DAY 6: The Caprivi Broadleaf Woodland

We will start with a pre breakfast birding walk around the lodge where we should see Black Cuckoo, African Mourning and Red-eyed Doves, African Green-pigeon, Meve's Starling, Brown Firefinch, Woodland kingfisher, Thick-billed Weaver, Violet-backed Starling, Swamp Boubou, Meyer's Parrot, Hartlaub's Babbler, White-browed Robin-chat and African Yellow White-eye.

From here we will spend the morning birding the woodland between Divundu and Rundu which offers us the chance to see some of the Miombo or Broadleaf specialists normally found further north in Zambia. These include Racket-tailed Roller, Rufous-bellied Tit, Souza's Shrike, Sharp-tailed Starling, Green-backed Honeybird and African Hobby.

Other more common birds found here include Pale and Black Flycatchers, Green-capped Eremomela, Southern Black Tit, Striped Kingfisher, Meyer's Parrot, Fork-tailed Drongo, Tinkling Cisticola, Neddicky, Coqui Francolin and Dark Chanting Goshawk.

We will spend a final night on the Okavango River and to try to catch up with any of the birds that we might have missed as we prepare for the second half of the trip in central and western Namibia.

🏠 Accommodation: Shamvura Camp / Hakusembe River Lodge on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis

DAY 7: Eastern Etosha National Park

After breakfast we will leave the more tropical woodlands of the Caprivi behind and make our way south to Etosha National Park where we will spend the next 3 nights.

The first night will be in the eastern section where we hope to find Blue Crane, Black-faced Babbler, Swainson's Spurfowl, Blue Waxbill, Chestnut Weaver, White-browed Robin-chat, Emerald-spotted Wood-dove, Cape Glossy Starling, Double-banded Courser and Chat Flycatcher along the way. If the Etosha pan is full of water it is transformed into a water bird spectacle with huge numbers of Pelican, Lesser and Greater Flamingos, Caspian Plover, Red-billed and Cape Teals, Chestnut-banded Plover, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilts and Black-necked and Great Crested Grebes.

From a mammal point of view this area is perfect for finding the endemic Damara Dik-dik. Etosha is one of the best game viewing parks in Africa and we hope to see Elephant, Lion, Black Rhino, Giraffe, Cheetah, Spotted Hyena, Leopard, Black-backed Jackal, Black-faced Impala (another endemic), Red Hartebeest, Oryx, Greater Kudu and Springbok during our stay in the park.

🏠 Accommodation: Mokuti Lodge on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis

DAY 8: Central Etosha National Park

Today will be dedicated exploring the vast Etosha National Park. As we make our way towards Halali camp which will be our Resort for tonight we will look for Monotonous and Rufous-naped Larks and we will keep an eye out for Etosha's raptors which include Martial Eagle and Tawny Eagles, Black-chested and Brown Snake-eagles, Lanner, Peregrine and Red-necked Falcons, Bateleur, Pale-chanting and Gabar Goshawks. Halali Resort is known for sightings of Violet Woodhoopoe, Carp's Black Tit, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Pied Babbler, White-crested Helmet-shrike, African Scops Owl and Southern White-faced Owlet. Etosha is also well known for vultures and we might see Lappet-faced, White-backed, White-headed and Hooded Vultures.

Around sunset and after dinner we will visit the waterhole next to the camp well known for Elephant, Black Rhino and Leopard sightings. From a birding point of view Double-banded Sandgrouse visit just after sunset and Spotted Eagle-owl, Pearl-spotted Owlet and Rufous-cheeked Nightjar are often seen around the waterhole.

🏠 Accommodation: Halali Resort on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis

DAY 9: The Okaukuejo area of Etosha National Park

After breakfast we will make our way further west as we continue to explore this great park. The area around Okaukuejo should produce Dusky and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Acacia Pied Barbet, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Southern

White-crowned Shrike, Marico Flycatcher, Chat Flycatcher, Rattling Cisticola, Double-banded and Namaqua Sandgrouse, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Ostrich, Kori Bustard, Northern Black and Red-crested Korhaan and Great Sparrow to name a few. We will scan on top of all the huge Sociable Weaver nests for Pygmy Falcon.

At the waterhole tonight we will look for Verreaux's Eagle-owl. We will also use the afternoon and perhaps the following morning to bird the Okondeka plains north of the camp where we will look for Spike-heeled, Pink-billed, Eastern Clapper, Red-capped and Sabota Larks as well as Grey-backed Sparrowlark, Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark, Capped Wheatear, Double-banded Courser, Desert Cisticola and Rufous-eared Warbler.

🏠 **Accommodation: Okaukuejo Resort on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis**

DAY 10: Western Etosha and Damaraland

After an early morning birding and game drive around Okaukuejo we will make our way to the far western section of the park visiting several waterholes along the way hoping to see Burchell's Sandgrouse drinking at one of them.

Once we leave the park we have an hour long drive to our lodge near Kamanjab. The lodge and surrounding area is home to several of Namibia's near endemic birds and other specials that include Bare-cheeked Babbler, Carp's Black Tit, Rockrunner, Hartlaub's Spurfowl, Ruppell's Parrot, African Scops Owl, Southern Pied Babbler and White-tailed Shrike. Monteiro's and Damara Hornbills are both common around the lodge. The lodge is known for their excellent night drives which often produces Aardvark, Aardwolf, Porcupine, Bat-eared Fox, Black-backed Jackal, African Wild Cat, Spotted Eagle-owl and Rufous-cheeked Nightjar.

Please let us know if you are interested in doing this in advance.

🏠 **Accommodation: Toko Lodge on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis**

DAY 11: Damaraland

We will be up early to catch up with any of the target birds that we might have missed and after breakfast we will make our way to the arid plains around the Brandberg Mountain, Namibia's highest mountain, where we will spend the night and search for specific target birds. We will scan the plains north of the mountain for Ruppell's Korhaan, Burchell's Courser, Bokmakierie and Benguela Long-billed Lark. The hills will hopefully produce Herero Chat, arguably the toughest of the endemics to find and Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Cape Penduline-tit and Grey-backed Cisticola can also be found here.

Our lodge is situated close to the Ugab River where we hope to see Violet Woodhoopoe and Bare-cheeked Babbler. Ruppell's Parrot and Augur Buzzard can be found here as well. We might also be lucky to encounter the famous desert adapted Elephants of north-western Namibia which move up and down the Ugab River during our stay.

🏠 Accommodation: Brandberg White Lady Lodge on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis

DAY 12: The Erongo Mountains

We will spend the morning birding around the Brandberg we will make our way to the Erongo Mountains where we will spend the night.

The Erongo Mountains and surrounds are a real endemic hotspot and we will focus on finding any of the endemics that we might have missed.

The granite hills surrounding the lodge are famous for Hartlaub's Spurfowl and Rockrunner. Besides these two specials we can look for Ruppell's Parrot, Carp's Black Tit, White-tailed Shrike, Monteiro's and Damara Hornbill, Violet Woodhoopoe, Pale-winged Starling, Red-billed Spurfowl, Augur Buzzard, Cinnamon-breasted, Golden-breasted, Cape and Lark-like Buntings.

Rosy-faced Lovebirds are present in massive numbers and we will also wrap up on the general scrub savannah birds like White-throated, Yellow and Black-throated Canaries, Green-winged Pytilia, Short-toed Rock-thrush, Violet-eared, Black-cheeked and Blue Waxbills, Barred Wren-warbler, Rattling Cisticola, Pirit Batis, Shaft-tailed Whydah, Red-eyed Bulbul, White-backed Mousebird, Cape Glossy Starling and Mountain Wheatear.

Dassie Rat and Rock Hyrax are common mammals while Black Mongoose, Leopard and Caracal are seen quite often. At night barn Owl and Freckled Nightjar are seen on most evenings.

🏠 Accommodation: Erongo Wilderness Lodge on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis

DAY 13: Walvis Bay and the coast

After our morning birding and breakfast we will make our way to Walvis Bay and the coast stopping to look for Gray's Lark along the way.

After settling into our Bed and Breakfast for the evening we will spend the afternoon at the Walvis Bay lagoon which has been declared a Ramsar site of global importance for thousands of waders that are found here. One of our main targets today will be the Damara Tern. Other birds we hope to find include Ruff, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Black-necked Grebe, Red-necked Phalarope, Bar-tailed Godwit, Spotted Redshank, Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Swift, Common, Sandwich and Caspian Terns, Eurasian and African Black Oystercatchers, Common Ringed, Chestnut-banded, Grey and Three-banded Plovers and Greater and Lesser Flamingos. Cape Cormorants are usually spotted in huge flocks and we will also look for Crowned and White-breasted Cormorants and if we are lucky Bank Cormorant.

The great thing about this area is that anything can pitch up so we have the possibilities to see a rarity or two. Pomarine Jaeger and Subantarctic Skua are sometimes seen from the shoreline. Orange-river White-eye, Cape Sparrow and Common Waxbill are all present in the lodge garden.

🏠 **Accommodation: Lagoon lodge on a bed and breakfast basis**

DAY 14: Dune Lark and departure

On our final morning we will focus on finding Dune Lark, Namibia's only true endemic and a great bird to end the trip with. We will spend time in the scenic Kuiseb Riverbed searching for this special at the base of some of the impressive dunes that forms a beautiful backdrop.

Other interesting birds we might see here include Bokmakierie, White-backed Mousebird, Cape Sparrow, Jackal Buzzard, Pale Chanting Goshawk and the desert form of the Trac-trac Chat.

As most flights from Walvis Bay International Airport depart around lunchtime we should have time to bird the lagoon area for any waders or shorebirds that we might have missed. This will be the official end of our birding safari.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.