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Short Namibia Endemics Birding Trip

4 DAY/ 3 NIGHT SAFARI

OVERVIEW

Namibia has a bird list of almost 700 species, with one true endemic and 15 near-endemics, along with many other spectacular species. A lot of the Namibian endemics and other specials can be found quite close to the capital of this vast country.

For serious birders short on time we now have a 3 night/4 day birding trip where we focus on finding as many of the Namibian near-endemics (along with the one true endemic) as possible. Our main targets will be Dune Lark, Gray's Lark, Benguela Long-billed Lark, Stark's Lark, Herero Chat, Damara Red-billed Hornbill, Carp's Tit, Monteiro's Hornbill, Ruppell's Parrot, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Pirit Batis, Rockrunner and Hartlaub's Spurfowl. Our endemics trip can also be customised to focus on nocturnal wildlife and rare mammals.

Our safari will start in the capital, Windhoek and from there we continue through the Namib Desert and onto the coastal town of Walvis Bay which is known for the high concentration of waders and other waterbirds. Then we move on towards Damaraland before we continue to the Erongo Mountains and then heading back to Windhoek. 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 drive to the coast (Walvis Bay)
DAY 2	Dune Lark, Swakopmund and Damaraland
DAY 3	Brandberg, Huab River and Erongo Mountains
DAY 4	Erongo and drive back to Windhoek

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Walvis Bay and the coast

With a very 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, Pririt 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 will arrive in Walvis Bay in the late afternoon.

After settling into our accommodations for the evening we will spend the late afternoon at the Walvis Bay lagoon which has been declared a Ramsar site of global importance for the thousands of waders that are found here. One of our main targets here 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.

Our lodge for the evening is situated right on the beachfront, a stone's throw away from the Atlantic Ocean. The sunsets here are simply breathtaking.

We will have dinner at one of the many good quality establishments in the town.

🏠 Accommodation: Lagoon Lodge on a bed and breakfast basis

DAY 2: Dune Lark, Swakopmund and Damaraland

After an early breakfast this morning we will focus on finding Dune Lark, Namibia's only true endemic and a great bird to have on any serious birder's list. We will spend time in the scenic Kuiseb Riverbed searching for this special bird at the base of some of the impressive dunes that form a beautiful backdrop. We will spend some time 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.

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 tonight 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.

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

DAY 3: Brandberg, Huab River and Erongo Mountains

After coffee and an early breakfast we will use the morning 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.

We will then continue to the incredibly beautiful rocky area of the Erongo Mountains and our overnight accommodations at the top notch Erongo Wilderness Lodge.

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

DAY 4: The Erongo Mountains

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.

After a full morning of birding we will drive back to Windhoek where our short but hopefully very rewarding trip will conclude.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.