

A wildlife, wildlife and more wildlife tour of –

Namibia and Botswana

7th August to 5th September 2012

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The Plan

I don't expect anybody goes to Africa to spend a few lazy weeks sitting on beaches, visiting temples or to expand their culinary horizons. It is generally animals and scenery that form the focus, and so it was with us. Our plan was to hire a 4WD in Windhoek, the Namibian capital, and travel widely in Namibia and Botswana to search for mammals and birds, without killing any.



Four line summary

Namibia and Botswana are ideal countries to see Southern African wildlife. Both have a low population of friendly and hospitable people; they are quite safe to poke around in; and contrary to common opinion, they are inexpensive - at least if you get paid in Australian dollars and stay in campgrounds.

Car hire, roads and driving

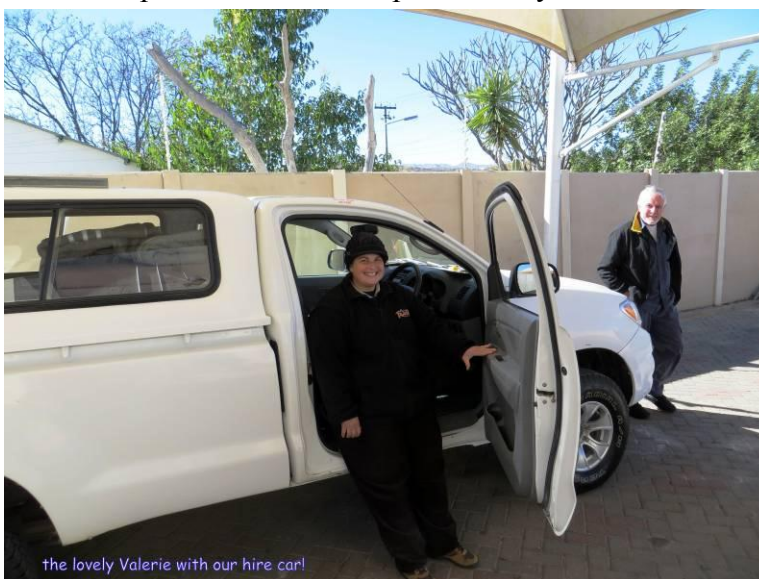
Most of the vehicles on the open road in Namibia and Botswana are hire cars. Car ownership outside of the largest towns is mostly restricted to white* farmers. We hired a Toyota Hilux 4WD diesel from African Tracks, a smallish company based in Windhoek. We were extremely happy with the vehicle, the price, the service and the company staff. This company is highly recommended. They can be contacted at tracks@iafrica.com.na

*Dangerous though it is to label people by skin colour, this report will make less sense in terms of our travel experience unless some distinction is made, so "black" and "white" and "San" (bushmen) it is.

The Toyota managed about eight point something litres per 100 kilometres during our 6300 km journey. This was better fuel consumption than we were promised by African Tracks. There is a reason for this.

The open highway notional speed limit is 120km/hr. It is very rare indeed for any vehicle to travel quite this slowly. Most cars overtook us accompanied by a small sonic boom and the smell of melting paint. We stayed at or below 100km/hr on sealed roads and 80km/hr on gravel or salt roads.

Yes, there are roads coated in salt. These are restricted to the coastal Namibian desert strip. These are very hard and safe, presumably until the car turns into rust - in a few weeks or so.



the lovely Valerie with our hire car!

Road conditions generally are excellent in Namibia and fairly good in Botswana. As in most civilised countries, vehicles drive on the left hand side. Most of each country is fairly



salt road, Namib Desert

flat, with long straight wide roads and very little traffic. Drivers are courteous and law abiding except for their open road speeding.

We were warned that animals were commonly parked on the little-used roads and that the best time to avoid hitting them was between 1115 and 1130. This proved impractical. The only animal we collided with was a red-billed quelea (a very small bird), which flew into the

side of the car while we were stopped. It survived; perhaps not a good thing for the quelea gene pool.

Directional signposting in both countries is adequate and in English. Speed limits are another thing entirely. Lower speed limits are posted on arrival into towns and villages and at roadworks, but the reverse is often not the case. Sometimes we'd drive for miles after exiting a town before we thought it was safe to speed up. The use of police radar is quite common. We managed to get smiles and waves from police as we crept (relatively) past these. On some occasions road workers blew kisses to us as we crawled through roadworks at the posted speed limit. Others ignored the lower limits.



Itinerary (as executed)

Day	Date	Destination	km	hrs	Stay at
1	07/08	Arrive Windhoek 18:45			Chameleon Backpackers
2	08/08	Namib-Naukluft NP	305	4:00	Sossus Oasis
3	09/08	Namib-Naukluft NP			Sesriem Camp
4	10/08	Namib-Naukluft NP	265	4:00	Blutkoppie Camp
5	11/08	Namib-Naukluft NP			Blutkoppie Camp
6	12/08	Swakopmund	152	2:15	Sophia Dale Base Camp
7	13/08	Swakopmund via Cape Cross	208	3:15	Sophia Dale Base Camp
8	14/08	Zelda Guest Farm	1.5 million	All of them	Zelda Guest Farm
9	15/08	Zelda Guest Farm			Zelda Guest Farm
10	16/08	Zelda Guest Farm			Zelda Guest Farm
11	17/08	Maun	520	7:00	Sedia Hotel
12	18/08	Maun / Okavango			Sedia Hotel
13	19/08	Maun / Okavango			Sedia Hotel
14	20/08	Maun / Okavango			Sedia Hotel
15	21/08	Kasane / Chobe NP via Nata	602	7:40	Senyati Camp
16	22/08	Kasane / Chobe NP			Senyati Camp
17	23/08	Kasane / Chobe NP			Senyati Camp
18	24/08	Kasane / Chobe NP			Senyati Camp
19	25/08	Kasane / Chobe NP			Senyati Camp
20	26/08	Mahengo Game Reserve	455	6:15	Popa Falls Camp
21	27/08	Shamvura Lodge	~120	~1:30	Shamvura Lodge
22	28/08	Etosha NP	~550	~7:00	Namutoni Camp
23	29/08	Etosha NP			Namutoni Camp
24	30/08	Etosha NP	70	1:10	Halali Camp
25	31/08	Etosha NP			Halali Camp
26	01/09	Etosha NP	70	1:05	Okaukuejo Camp
27	02/09	Etosha NP			Okaukuejo Camp
28	03/09	Etosha NP			Okaukuejo Camp
29	04/09	Windhoek	416	5:30	Chameleon Backpackers
30	05/09	Depart 12:35			

Namibian / Batswana* people

*This really is the name of the people of Botswana

Superficially all the white and black folk seem to get along just fine and everyone we met was friendly and tried to be helpful. In reality Namibia and Botswana are undergoing a slow transition from being almost entirely run by white people to having a mix of management.

Understandably these changes don't always run too smoothly. As a case in point, the management of the Namibian national parks network is with the public-private Namibian Wildlife Resorts. These guys are all black as near as I can tell and although they mean well they are pretty hopeless. Booking campsites in the parks is almost impossible. Without the continued intervention of Valerie from African Tracks we would have stayed in Australia.

Once at the parks there is a complicated and unnecessary morass of paperwork to wade through. Any questions relating to the wildlife in the parks are answered in a friendly manner. The only problem here is that the answers are stupid or misleading; but clearly the staff don't want to disappoint, so they figure that any sort of answer is better than none.

In general terms we found that the black folk were charming, relaxed and often very attractive! The exceptions were found at white-run establishments where the management was a tad harsh. There may, of course, have been good reasons for this. Nevertheless at places like the Sedia Hotel at Maun, Botswana, the black staff were happy, fun to be with and clearly positive about their employment. So it is possible.



There is one thing to be aware of - never trust any answer to a question about roads or general geography. It is likely that the person you ask has never been to the subject location - even if it is the road leading straight out of the town you happen to be standing in. But that won't stop them trying to be helpful and offering a plausible answer. "Oh, yeah, that's a good road with plenty of wildlife". The reality might be that the road is a string of hippo-

filled waterholes or the winning entry in the World Corrugated Road Championships. We asked someone, who should have known better, whether a certain road had camping sites located along it. "Yeah, plenty", was the answer. The correct answer was "no".

While local newspapers told horror stories of urban crime sprees, we saw none of this. Guide books were explicit that cars should never be left unattended near shops and the like. Maybe we were just lucky but dodgy-looking people were far rarer on the ground on our holiday than they are at home.

Costs

This deserves a mention. Namibia and Botswana have a reputation for being expensive countries to travel within. Sure, if you stay in resorts and hire guides and tours everywhere you go, you will soon spend enough money to buy two or three European countries. If you hire a car as we did, with a fridge and camping gear included, buy and cook your own meals and stay in campgrounds, then you will have a very inexpensive holiday indeed.

The hire car + all the gear cost us less than \$A100 per day (= \$US96). Camp fees varied between \$A7 and \$A20 pppn. Almost all campgrounds have electricity to each site. Some even have private facilities (shelter, flush toilets, showers, lighting, sinks) for every campsite. Many have swimming pools, restaurant, tour activities etc. And unlike Australian campsites, in Africa there is always plenty of room between each camper.

Imported food is much the same price as it is in Australia. Locally produced stuff is generally cheaper. This includes meat (much cheaper), eggs and some fruit and vegetables. Beer, an essential food item, can readily be bought in supermarkets and costs less than \$1 per 330ml bottle. See also, "Beer, wine and other food".

Diesel and petrol cost about \$US1.20 per litre, which is okay - unless you live in the USA.

National park entry fees are not exorbitant - generally less than \$US10 pppd.

Wildlife (see also lists and notes at the end of this report)

We identified 324 different birds and 53 mammals.

The bird list did not exceed expectations. At times we struggled to find birds in what appeared to be the right habitats. This was exacerbated by being car-bound in some of the national parks - and for good reason, considering the diet of some of the animals found therein. Many of the birds were pretty boring anyway - with vast lists of larks and cisticolas. With these we tried to find regional specialties and once this was achieved, we ignored them. Actually this isn't quite true - as Barry-Sean ignored them from the outset.

A few odd things were seen. These included some early summer passage migrants like a flock of redshanks seen in Etosha NP. The rare and localised black-cheeked lovebird was the first bird seen at Victoria Falls, whilst far more common and widespread parrots eluded us entirely. A vast scrum of "Caprivi Strip specialties" were unable to be located.

One of the best sites was the Walvis Bay sewage farm overflow, which fills a series of very natural-looking desert lakes. Vast numbers of different birds could be seen here and in Walvis Bay itself. Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana was probably the pick of the other sites and if we weren't so focussed on the superb mammals fauna there, many more birds could have been seen.



Of mammals - we weren't going to swap our list with anyone else's. Whilst we "dipped" on hunting dog, which was something of a disappointment, and failed to see cheetah, which wasn't so bad as we had seen them on an earlier holiday, we did manage a few hard to find critters. These included a friendly diurnal aardwolf in the Namib Desert on Day 1; not one but three honey badgers within 45 minutes in the Moremi Game Reserve; great views of South African porcupine at Zelda Guest Farm; 180 elephants at once at Senyati Camp; 11 black and two white rhinos together in Etosha; a leopard up a tree, also in Etosha; and more than 70 lions when all the sightings were added together.

The best sites for mammals were Moremi Game Reserve for variety - with 20 different mammals being seen in one day, and Chobe or Etosha national parks for biomass, with both housing ridiculous numbers of large mammals. Any national park, game reserve or well protected private land in either country has lots of easily seen furry critters.

We had copies of *The Birds of Southern Africa (Ian Sinclair)* and for mammals we relied on the *Kingdon Guide to African Mammals (Jonathon Kingdon)*. The bird guidebook is relatively good, especially the plates, except that it describes many birds as being common which clearly are not common, at least not in the areas we visited.



Mr Kingdon may have to revisit his range maps. We saw quite a few large ugly mammals that are clearly out of range in *Kingdon*, e.g. red lechwe, which was common in the Okavango but not shown to be there at all (this occupied Barry-Sean for hours - as he tends to place too much trust in published material).

Reptiles were not too evident. Nile crocodile was easy to see, along with a few unidentified gecko and skinks. Not a single live snake was seen. Rock monitors (*Varanus albigularis*) were seen in Etosha and Nile monitors (*Varanus niloticus*) in Chobe NP. The lizard that lifts its feet in the air, the Namib desert lacertid, (*Meroles anchietae*) was seen in the Namib Desert.

Insects (annoying) - none.

Insects (not annoying) - almost none.

Vegetation is very common. Both countries are covered with it. Very little has been cleared.

Others may have a different view but I find savannah, along with mopane and miombo woodland to be a tad boring. Sure, on the first day it looks neat, well, like Africa really, and after that it gets a bit monotonous. It certainly works out okay for the wildlife, as there is no shortage of that.

The Namib Desert is the exception. There are lots of interesting plants and adaptations going on here, especially in rocky areas. If I went back to Namibia, I could spend much

more time in Namib-Naukluft National Park, assuming I didn't freeze to death doing so. See "Weather".

Beer, wine and other food

Great news - the beer is pretty good. Windhoek Lager or Windhoek Draught were the pick of them, but don't worry - most of the local (Namibia / South Africa) brews taste pretty much the same. They are widely available and inexpensive. The only problem is the packaging. Each six-pack is wrapped in the same material they use to shield the space shuttle during launch. It is impossible to remove without special tools and swearing a lot. The good news is that once the initial break has been made the bottles purr softly at their release and can be enjoyed in the normal way.

One of the best reasons to live in Australia is the red wine. We found some of the South African reds to be okay. I confess that we didn't target the top end of the market. Frustratingly just when you found something you liked, no other store in either country would stock it - or they had run out.

We ate almost exclusively on food we bought in Spar supermarkets. These shops were excellent. They have everything under one roof, the shop assistants are gorgeous and the adjacent car parks have security guards.

Some comments on food items are in order. Firstly eggs. Gently crack an Australian egg on any hard surface and the egg breaks instantly. Sometimes the egg even anticipates being cracked and breaks in your hand. Namibian eggs don't behave like this. They stubbornly refuse to crack against anything less than substantial blocks of steel. Remarkably up to half the eggs in some cartons were double-yolkers. What do they feed Namibian chickens? Or are they mutant ostriches?

Tomatoes were good value - they even tasted like tomatoes.

Meat was a lucky dip. Sometimes steak was tender and delicious. At other times even the local jackals wouldn't eat it (seriously). What we in Australia call sausages are at a whole different plane of existence in Southern Africa. Put simply - they seemed to have meat in them. Not only that, they are available in many flavours that actually taste different from one another. There is a business opportunity at home here....

Things called rusks were another treat. They presented as flavoured stale bread. They tasted better than this, although like stale bread, they couldn't go stale.

We had little experience with restaurant or "fast" food. On the odd occasion we lapsed, and weren't too excited by the food. Once we had meat pies for lunch. The volume of noxious gases expelled post-pie tested physical limits. I thought I had swallowed a ginger beer plant (assuming you know what one of these looks like).

Notes on sites and accommodation (in the order they were encountered)

NAMIBIA

Chameleon Backpackers @ Windhoek

This lodge is recommended. It has a range of accommodation options, is relatively inexpensive, and has fairly good facilities. The management are competent; the included breakfasts are more than adequate and the bar and small swimming pool useful at the start / end of a holiday! Chameleon has a website and can be contacted at chameleonbackpackers@iway.na

Sossus Oasis @ Sesriem (just outside Namib-Naukluft National Park)

We stayed here only because the campground inside the park - several hundred metres away - was said to be fully booked. The campsite was wonderful in terms of its private amenities. There was nothing else to sing its praises as there isn't a stick of vegetation or anything to do inside the campground. It is not expensive and it is very close to the park entrance.



Sesriem Campground (just inside Namib-Naukluft National Park)

This campground is managed by Namibian Wildlife Resorts. It is roomy with shady trees at most sites. Site numbers are allocated to campers, but this might only happen during peak season. Birds and a few small mammals such as ground squirrels roam the grounds by day, with jackals at night. The amenities are pretty atrocious, with water for showers dribbling out of a hole in the wall. The other amenities are not quite as good. The great advantage is that you jump the queue for entry into the park when the gate opens.

Blutkoppie Camp (in the northern section of Namib-Naukluft National Park)

We were a little surprised, given the amount of infrastructure at Sesriem, to find nobody at all, including other campers, at Blutkoppie. We were told by staff at Sesriem that there was electricity supplied by a generator, water and all sorts of other things that have never ever seen the light of day at Blutkoppie. The better campsites are accessible to 4WD only.

The only facilities at Blutkoppie are solar-powered automatic flush toilets which don't really work, despite Barry-Sean's tinkering, which, I suspect, only made them worse. The material that is supposed to flush the toilets seemed to be not of this world, but this is only a guess. It was possible to hang the stuff in a tree for a while before it fell on the ground. It may have been a fluid of some kind earlier in the earth's history.



Nevertheless the site is well worth a couple of nights as there are lots of places to explore. The campsites are well shaded and there are quite a few birds and mammals to be seen.

"Blutkoppie" means "bloody great big rock that sticks out of the desert and looks really nice when the sun shines on it" in Afrikaans. It is scalable, peppered with caves and hosts noisy rock hyraxes and other wildlife. The area on and

around the koppie (which really means "rocky hill") is wonderfully varied in terms of its vegetation and there are no animals about that are likely to eat you. So there is free reign to do whatever you like. We missed this opportunity later in the trip when we became car-bound. We agreed that we could have spent more time here. Bring plenty of water!

Sophia Dale Base Camp @ Swakopmund

The camp is actually about 10km inland from Swakopmund and backs onto the Swakop "River". It is inexpensive, leafy, quiet and has a great restaurant and bar. The German owners are friendly, relaxed and helpful. The amenities are good, but get in early if you want hot water. The camp can be contacted at sophia@mweb.com.na

Zelda Game and Guest Farm, near the Botswana border east of Gobabis.

The campsites were the best we found on our trip and the amenities were superb, with great showers and toilets, swimming pool, restaurant and bar. Many tame birds and mammals could be seen in and around the grounds. Zelda presents very good value. Activities included dances and other cultural interactions (!) with San (Bushmen) villagers and spotlighting for critters. These were also inexpensive and very rewarding. The farm can be contacted at zeldaguestfarm@iway.na

BOTSWANA

Sedia Hotel @ Maun

This hotel and its associated restaurant, bar and swimming pool is very good. The campsites are okay, but not very level. The amenities are fairly ordinary, but given the

friendship and kindness shown by the owner, Alan, and Janet, his wife, we have no complaints. A travel agency is co-located and owned by the hotel. They run excellent tours of the Moremi Game Reserve and Okavango Delta and are recommended. Their email address is quadrum@info.bw

Senyati Camp, near Kasane and the Zimbabwe border (which is literally 400m away)

This was probably the best place we stayed for a variety of reasons. Whilst the campsite fees are relatively high @ 155 Pula pppn (just less than \$US20), this is still less than that charged by Namibian Wildlife Resorts for camps in Namibia's national parks.

Senyati has no restaurant but it has a sensational and very inexpensive bar overlooking a waterhole that is the favourite drinking site for more elephants than you can poke a stick at. Our best count was 180, with ~500 being the camp record.



Each campsite has private amenities, shelter and free firewood.

Be warned - honey badgers raid the rubbish bins by night (presenting a very good chance to see these amazing creatures) and baboons raid your food by day (presenting a very good reason to hate baboons). Many other mammals can easily be seen here, with opportunities for doing your own spotlighting at night - with good results.

We spent five nights at Senyati - the longest we stayed at any one site. It is one of the places I could easily revisit. Louw, the owner / manager is a great company. "Lo" can arrange good value visits by boat to the nearby Chobe National Park as well as great day trips to Victoria Falls (less than 100km away) in Zimbabwe.

Contact email is juanitav@orangemail.co.bw

NAMIBIA

Popa Falls, in the Caprivi Strip

We stayed one night here. The falls are vertically challenged at less than one metre high. Campsites are shaded. The amenities are okay without being exciting. The site is managed by Namibian Wildlife Resorts, who have clearly lost interest in the place. Not really recommended, but okay if you can't find anywhere else to stay. There are more security guards than clients - I guess this tells its own story.

Shamvura Lodge, further west in the Caprivi Strip

This occupies a rather scenic site overlooking the Kavango River and into Angola. The campsites are shaded, good and some of them have electricity. There is a good swimming pool and drinking platform that allows views of Angola being set on fire. The husband and wife team that own the lodge are a mixed bag. The wife, Charlie, is chatty, friendly and helpful. Mark, her husband, is not at all similar. They have a bar and may have food - I lost interest in finding out.

Etosha National Park

There are three popular campsites - Namutoni, Halali and Okaukuejo. They are all managed by Namibian Wildlife Resorts and present different experiences. The grounds are all quite good and the campsites are roomy and have all the bits you need. The amenities



are sufficient but hot water can be problematic at times. If you have a ground tent at Okaukuejo Camp you will need some serious machinery to get pegs into the so-called ground.

All camps have swimming pools, restaurants and bars. They have shops and fuel too, but the likelihood of finding what you

want can be problematic. There was buggar all food at Halali and no diesel at this camp during our stay.

All three camps have adjacent waterholes within walking distance. The one at Okaukuejo is by far the best for wildlife - both by day and by night.

Weather

Our transit through Johannesburg coincided with the first snowstorm seen there for 32 years. The tail end of this weather system meant "two jackets" temperatures for the first week of our trip. The nights were well below freezing.

The famous Namib Desert coastal sea fog was well in evidence. This was also cold. On one occasion the fog was at the "rain" end of the scale, with our lovely car covered in mud.

Our tour coincided with the middle of the dry season. This was deliberate for the very good reason that the wildlife is easier to see if there is less grass and less water. It only rained heavily once, in Botswana. The car got a wash and the locals got to ponder the miracle of rain in August.

By holiday's end the weather had cheered up remarkably. It was hot by day and mild by night. The message here is that if you go to Namibia or Botswana in springtime, bring everything.



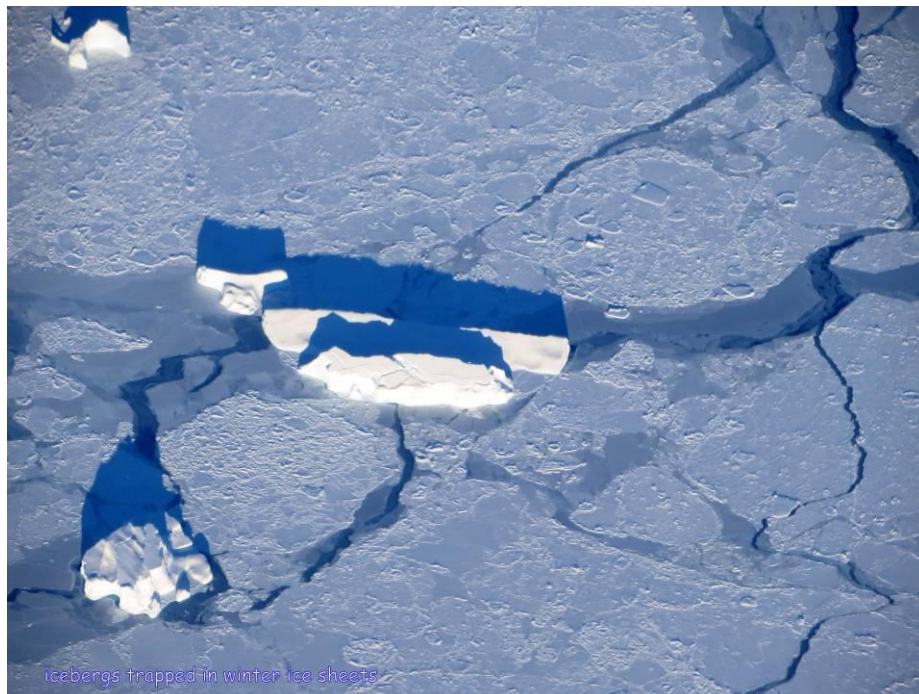
Diary

Tuesday 7th August 2012

Shane, my niece's American husband gave us a lift to the airport for our Qantas 747-400 flight to Johannesburg. Proving that no two flights, or their associated paperwork, are ever the same, we spent quite some time at the check-in area. Unbelievably, because I had used Qantas frequent flyer points to book the flight to Jo'burg and then bought a South African Airways ticket from there to the Namibian capital, Windhoek, Qantas said they couldn't load my baggage for EITHER flight. I remained very calm, not so much because it is a good strategy when faced with stupidity, but because the information given us was so bizarre.

The Head Pooba of South African Airways was summoned and she nodded gravely as several computer screens were interrogated. I wondered what happens when there is a real crisis? Eventually we checked in with a smiling lady of Indian extraction at the Qantas Club counter.....

The flight left on time at 1000, landing at Johannesburg 14 hours later, six and a half hours later! We had 22 hours of daylight as our flight took us over Antarctic ice sheets and pack ice. For hours we watched the ice with its trapped icebergs. Stupidly I reached for the binoculars in the hope that I could spot a seal or penguin, with predictable results. It was quite stunningly beautiful. The plane was quite empty so we enjoyed the luxury of rows of seats to ourselves.



Excitement greeted our arrival at Jo'burg. This had nothing to do with my baggage being unloaded. It had been snowing - for the first time in 32 years. Curiously the figure "32" is a bit wobbly. Despite everyone over the age of 40 or so clearly remembering the last time it

snowed, the number of years that had elapsed was far less certain - anything from 30 to 35. I picked 32 more or less at random.

Our SAA A319 flight to Windhoek left and arrived on time. The catering on this short flight was better than Qantas had managed. Miraculously our bags also arrived.

Our attempts at purchasing duty free liquor had been thwarted by silly rules at both Sydney and Jo'burg, so imagine how thrilled we were to find that there was no duty free shop on arrival in Namibia. We hoped that this wasn't a sign of things to come.....

After surviving the shock of the duty free situation we were cheered to see a large man holding a piece of paper with our names written on it. He took us to our new home, the Chameleon Backpackers, where our booking was acknowledged. We soon settled into a restless sleep, or not.

Wednesday 8th August 2012

After a fractious sleep I found myself pacing around the lodge waiting for our 0830 pick up by the hire car company. Keeping me amused was the largely Australian vegetation - Illawarra flame trees, eucalypts and silky oaks. A start was made to our bird list - with various sunbirds, weavers, starlings and white-backed mousebirds.

At exactly 0830, as agreed, we were whisked off to the African Tracks 4WD Hire office. Here the ever-cheerful, competent and larger than life Valerie greeted us. It was fun to actually meet after the 30,000 odd emails we had sent to each other. Valerie had been instrumental in sorting through the incompetence, laziness and indifference displayed by the inmates at Namibian Wildlife Resorts - the management authority for all accommodation in Namibia's national parks. If it hadn't been for the super-efficient Valerie, I would have stayed at home.

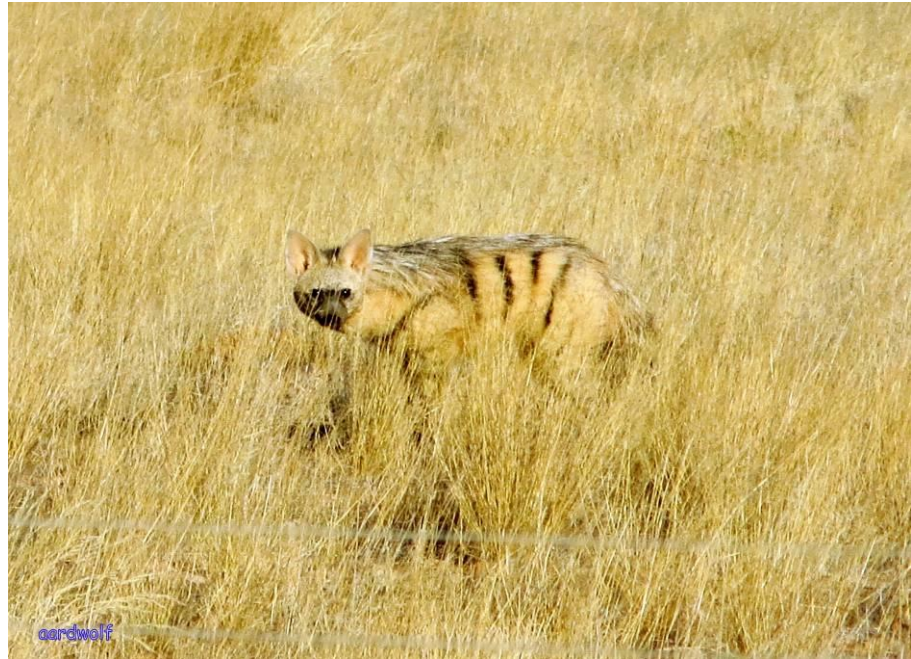
Valerie gave us the orientation tour for our 4WD Toyota Hilux Diesel. This was supplied with a fridge and camping and cooking gear. A frustrating mix of excitement, tiredness, nervous stress and cold weather combined with a strong desire to get moving. Eventually we escaped Valerie's clutches, bought fuel and found our way to a supermarket. Happily we could buy everything we needed in one exceedingly large shop. The checkout lovelies had never seen so much stuff loaded onto one trolley.

At 1100 we escaped Windhoek. This happened very suddenly. Within a few metres the landscape changed from sealed urban motorway to wilderness on dirt.

We passed many very birdy locations on what was to be one of the most scenic drives of the whole holiday. The scenery was at times dramatic and more varied than expected with rapid changes in geology, vegetation and landforms. We were so happy!

Our destination was Sesriem, on the edge of the famous Namib-Naukluft National Park. En route we spied many mammals, including chacma baboons, black-backed jackals, greater kudu, mongooses, springbok, oryx, blue wildebeest, warthog, rock hyrax and stunning views of an aardwolf standing near the roadside 12 kilometres short of our destination in plain daylight. Many Africans have never seen an aardwolf. I mentioned to Barry-Sean that we would do well to see a better mammal in the month ahead.....

We arrived at 1700 and checked into the Sossus Oasis Campground. This had great private facilities and our relatively late arrival mattered not as there wasn't a stick of vegetation, so there were few birds or other wildlife to be seen.



Our dinner consisted of tasty sausages, onions and tomato washed down by the rather attractive Windhoek Lager. We congratulated ourselves on an excellent day!

Thursday 9th August 2012

We'd packed up, showered, eaten and entered the park by opening time - 0700. The road through to Sossusvlei (a more or less permanent lake in the desert) is mostly sealed and provides some of the best scenery in the country. There are some good birds, mammals and other animals to seek; including all those things that you thought only lived in TV documentaries, like the silly beetles that run all over the dunes like wind-up toys and the little lizards (called Namib desert lacertid, *Meroles anchietae*) that lift opposite feet to stop them from frying on the hot sand. Except that the sand wasn't even slightly hot but they lifted their little feet anyway.

We had plenty of time to explore and there was no need to stay in the vehicle. Apparently big scary cats are a bit thin on the ground so you are free to wander, get lost or hurt yourself at your leisure. Naturally, being the first full day in the field we spotted lots of nice things - many of which we would later see almost daily.

We checked into the Sesriem Camp and amused ourselves



with the resident ground squirrels, four-striped grass mice and campground bum birds. Black-backed jackals patrolled the camp at night. Barry-Sean cooked a delicious stew for dinner.





Friday 10th August 2012

We ate, packed up and tried to exit the park but were thwarted by a closed gate. Dozens of cars and trucks were stacked on the other side trying to get in. They wouldn't let us out - rules are rules.

Soon after we got going we were stopped at a mobile police checkpoint. A friendly copper asked after our health, pointed out the lovely sunrise and wished to look at my driver's license. No problem, sir. Except my license was nowhere to be seen. I shredded my wallet, started getting agitated and made all sorts of odd noises. Then it hit me - the African Tracks photocopier - aaaarrggh! The smiling law enforcement man said that I really should have a driver's license and sent me on my way. He scored a stuffed kangaroo and a cap.

As we drove off marveling at our good fortune I wondered whether the missing license was inside my passport, which had also been on the photocopier, and which was in my possession? Sure it was. So we went back to the checkpoint to spread the good news. Instead of getting a royal wave and a smile, we now had to deal with all the paperwork of driving through the checkpoint WITH a license, which took more time than driving past without one.

Our next destination was Blutkoppie, a campsite in the northern section of Namib-Naukluft NP and about 270km from Sesriem. As we had scheduled two nights here, we had heaps of time so managed lots of ten minute wildlife stops along the way. Dassie rat (a very interesting rodent), yellow mongoose, giraffe (in a desert?) and the striking Hartmann's mountain zebra were added to our mammal list.



The scenery was often stark, with dry rocky vistas and some of the harshest habitat I've ever seen. I thought that some of the roadside scenery was boring at the time, but in retrospect it wasn't - boring was yet to come.

Our arrival at Blutkoppie was confusing. There wasn't any human presence whatsoever. Now we knew why the folk at the park's office in Sesriem were keen to extract the entry fees - otherwise they wouldn't get paid. The Blutkoppie area is wonderful with weird

vegetation, lots of strange geology and quite a few birds, reptiles and mammals either present or evident. We selected campsite #13, under some large acacias and wondered how long our water would last, given that there wasn't any at the camp.



Someone had left some firewood for us to use, so after a couple of short walks we had a beer or two and a braai (BBQ) of rib-eye steak and vegies. A short spotlight revealed the arboreal acacia rat and a Cape hare. The total lack of other campers and their attendant noise meant the first reasonable sleep of the holiday.

Saturday 11th August 2012

Breakfast was followed by five hours of cold fog and cloud. Barry-Sean proffered that the fog was an icon of the Namib Desert. It certainly iconically interfered with finding any wildlife. The birds failed to wake up at all.

As the fog lifted, herds of zebra, oryx, springbok and giraffe were seen, along with Ludwig's and Rueppell's bustards, the regionally endemic herero chat and a few other bits and pieces. The different adaptations of the plants around Blutkoppie are reason enough for a visit.

After lunch and coffee back at camp the looming rock monolith that names it beckoned to be scaled. Most folk do this by walking along the ridge that runs along the mountains long axis. This seemed too much trouble so I walked straight up at the closest point. There are many caves and overhangs scattered about the uppermost parts of the koppie. These are home to raptors and have been for millennia. Raptor crap forms stalagmites on favourite perches.

The walk was very strange in that there always seemed to be some sort of way of getting from one point to any other point despite the overall steepness of the rock. Unusual



giraffe at Blutkoppie in the Namib Desert

vegetation finds a way to live in the incredibly hostile environment. Around every corner there was something to grab the attention or marvel at.

A post-dinner car-based spotlight session disappointed. Nine scrub hares were seen and nothing else. We had dreamed of seeing aardvark as there were many active burrows in the area. It was not to be.

Sunday 12th August 2012

We left Blutkoppie quite early as we expected to make a number of stops along the way to our next destination - Swakopmund, on the Atlantic coast. However the vegetation became more stunted and sparse and then it disappeared altogether. The couple of hours it took to get to the coast produced the least birds I've ever seen over that time period.

We decided to alter our schedule and visit Walvis Bay, a port town south of Swakopmund, and home to the largest flamingo colony in Africa. Fortunately we were aware of a series of lakes, courtesy of the Walvis Bay sewage farm overflow, that extend eastwards into the desert. These were rather natural looking and hosted many thousands of birds. These included various ducks, geese, grebes, waders, gulls, lapwings, flamingoes, pelicans, cormorants and dreaded cisticolas. Reeds and a few small bushes fringe some of the lakes. I'm certain we didn't spot all of the animals that lived in the area, but we certainly enjoyed the site and added a long list of birds we weren't to see again on our trip.

The bay after which Walvis Bay gets its name is bird soup. Countless flamingoes compete for space with gulls, terns, over-wintering waders, cormorants and avocets. The flamingoes were quite tame and could be approached to within a couple of metres. We drove around some salt farms and lunched along the Walvis Bay promenade. The town itself is modern, clean and tidy.



Dune 7, Walvis Bay



Walvis Bay Flamingoes

On the short drive to Swakopmund we stopped at a truly bizarre structure built over the sea. This was a large elevated platform and has one purpose - to be shat upon. By birds. Every year, or so we read, the bird turds are harvested for fertilizer. The amount claimed to be collected is beyond belief - something like a thousand tonnes. A caretaker was present in an adjacent cottage. Bird shit theft must be rampant.



We found our shady and good campsite at Sophia Dale Base Camp without drama. I was soon off to the Swakop River, which runs along the back fence of the camp, searching for birds. There was a little water in it - for the first time in 34 years - and thousands of birds. Unfortunately these were confined to about ten species.

Barry-Sean stitched up a deal with Manfred, the camp's owner / chef that we would dine in his restaurant. On zebra. What was he thinking? I was appalled at the prospect of eating striped giddy-up. It was delicious - tender and very tasty. Yum. The generous and wonderfully cooked and presented meal cost \$A13.

Monday 13th August 2012

Seal Day. We drove the salt road north to Cape Cross to view the Cape fur seal colony. En route we stopped at a parked Angolan fishing trawler. The skipper had fallen asleep and found the Atlantic shore too sandy for his propellers. They don't call it the Skeleton Coast for no reason.



Not a single bird was seen all the way to Cape Cross, save for the village bums at Henties Bay.

A cultural curiosity is the size and number of seemingly abandoned campgrounds scattered along the desolate coastline. Evenly spaced toilets were the clue to their existence, although why anyone would wish to camp in the area is a mystery. In a similar vein there were a few villages scattered along this miserable coastline, with Jakkalsputz an amazing example of oddness in its situation, architecture and apparent lack of any inhabitants.



Jakkalsputz houses

Our arrival at Cape Cross coincided with a truckload of slaughtered seal pups travelling in the other direction. Someone had left the gate open for the departing ex-resident wildlife, allowing our entry. We were soon told to leave as the reserve doesn't open to those who merely wish

to view the wildlife, without killing it, until 1000. We adjourned to a new, nearby and ridiculously oversized resort and were gob smacked as to why anyone would stay in such a place.

The seal colony is worth a look. Many thousands of seals still live. A single jackal was seen, along with gulls, seabirds including Cape gannet and white-chinned petrels, and the odd shorebird. A few killer whales or brown hyenas would have added a little excitement but this didn't happen.



Cape Cross seal rookery

Our languid return to Swakopmund included stops at Henties Bay for lunch and at the site of a cruise ship that had parked itself rather permanently on the beach. It looked spooky. We drove about Swakopmund for a bit after plundering the local Spar supermarket. The town of 55,000 is neat and modern and was in the process of being hammered by huge seas which had inundated some of the waterfront properties.



As the weather had been bitterly cold and foggy all day we crawled into bed soon after dinner just to get warm.

Tuesday 14th August 2012

We were gone from Sophia Dale before sunrise. We weren't to know at the time but we had a very long day ahead of us. Others contributed to this. Firstly we were told that the minor road that connects Henties Bay and Okahandja in the east is "very scenic" and that there was a good chance of seeing some large mammals from it. Well, rain (I refuse to call it fog when the wipers were on constantly) greeted the dawn. This combined with the salt road to cover our beautiful hire car with salty mud. We washed this off as best we could at the start of the scenic



road that was somewhat scenery challenged on account of the fog. No large animals were seen.

The second and more disappointing piece of misinformation was supplied by an employee of African Tracks who assured us that there were campsites along the road from Okahandja via Hochfeld to Gobabis, the last major town before Namibia expires at the Botswana border. There are not. So we kept driving until we reached Zelda Game and Guest Farm, just near the border, and just before the sun set. We had driven all the way across Namibia, mostly on back-roads. We were now two days ahead of schedule, which isn't ordinarily a problem, but as our travel was during the peak tourist period, there was always a chance that all accommodation would be fully booked.

Happily the Zelda folk could move our booking forwards. We had planned to stay for two nights but ended up staying for three as the campground, amenities and activities on offer were excellent.

The resident family of meerkats put in an appearance.

Wednesday 15th August 2012

It was great not to have to drive anywhere. I wandered the grounds and adjacent forest at Zelda, adding a few birds to our list. Time then allowed for washing clothes, reading and writing. For the first time since leaving Sydney, I could slow down.

Zelda is a 10,000ha farm that is lightly stocked with cattle and other farm animals. The rest is home to big cats and other wildlife. Two San villages with 37 inhabitants also sit within the property. The owner, Luis (Lewis?), mentioned that all the San were employed on the farm.

The afternoon offered more wandering, sitting, sunbathing and a brief dip in a very cold swimming pool. This last activity had the effect of frightening off two fetching young lasses in their bikinis. It's good to know I still have what it takes.... A couple of the camp's meerkats weren't so easily put off and enjoyed the poolside fun. These attention-seeking creatures would make great pets if you enjoyed having holes in your garden.

We watched the farm's menagerie being fed. These included four cheetahs, a leopard, a South African porcupine and some emus. Emus? But why?

Around dusk we adjourned to one of the San villages for a little Bushman culture. I couldn't stop thinking of the Python sketch "The Batsmen of the Kalahari".



And I pondered how many Coke bottle jokes they've been inflicted with. Anyway the presumably authentic song and dance routine was joyful and fun as the men danced, the women chanted and the kids got involved however they could manage. Finally, the handful of tourists present were obliged to get up and dance the final number.



The San really do have fat bums to store irregular food that used to come their way. Their language is odd, with the strangest part being that they struggle to understand each other. Apparently when two different groups meet they have a hard time communicating. We had a good time and felt really privileged to meet full-blood Bushmen.

We were unescorted and using "our" car to get to and from the San village, located a few kilometres inside the farm, so we lurked down the track a bit and waited for darkness so we could do some illicit spotlighting back to camp. A bat-eared fox and a hare were the only mammals seen.

It was a very cold night.

Thursday 16th August 2012

If it was entirely up to me, I would have left Zelda for Botswana, but Baz was keen to stay another day and this turned out to be a good decision.

I wandered up to the leopard enclosure. The female cat deftly pissed on me through the wire and then tracked me as I poked along its fence, stopping when I stopped and moving on when I moved. You would have no chance at all with a cat like this in the wild.

All the local birds seem to hang around the homestead / campground - where there is water - during the first part of the morning, dispersing later.

As all the other campers had left, we found time to chat with some of the camp staff. These folk were very friendly but nervous that they might be seen not working. The most feared white person was a formidable, large and unsmiling creature, whose status was unclear to us. The penalty for staff idleness was also unclear, although it may have involved large spotted cats in some way.



After lunch we drove the ten minutes to the Botswana border and discovered a little-used road heading south from it. Many birds that we hadn't seen were found, along with a few mammals. While we were looking at birds over a fence a white boy pulled up beside us and asked if he could help with anything. He turned out to be

the property owner. His dog licked me, no doubt puzzled at why I smelled of leopard piss and yet still lived. He mentioned that he knew the place we were camped and happily went on his way.

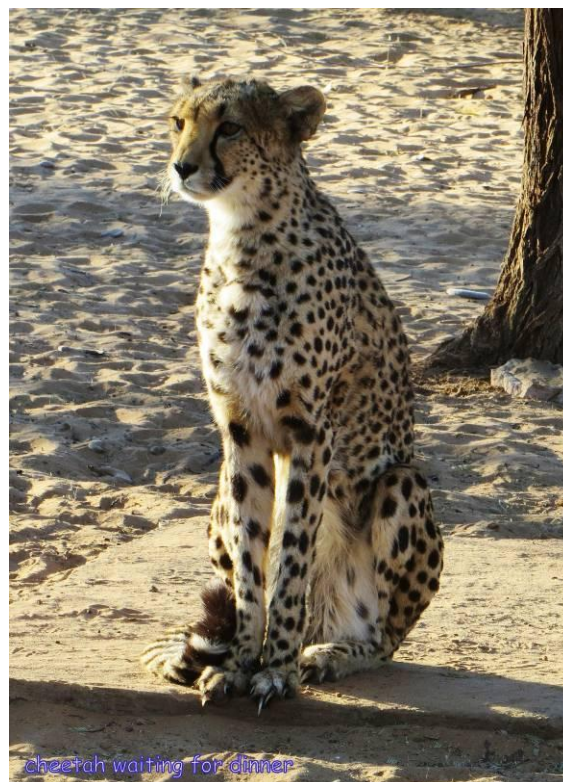
White residents of Namibia / Botswana never give any information if they can avoid it. Direct questions may elicit useful answers but often the question is avoided or else misinformation is supplied. In the case of the chap, Dion, that we met as we pondered his property - of course he knew the folk at Zelda - he is the brother of the owner's wife. He didn't tell us this. Many times during the trip we marveled at just how little people would say to answer simple uncontroversial questions. In terms of Zelda's ownership we had been given three versions by camp staff and others:

- An old lady whose husband was murdered in a robbery owns the property. She is an unhappy soul who lives a Howard Hughes style existence (when she isn't feeding staff to the wildlife),
- An old lady who had never married owns Zelda, and
- "I own the whole property", courtesy of the male who was later holding the spotlight next to me.

All very friendly of course, but at some point in the history of these countries it must have paid handsomely to shut up.

Back at camp and some focused slothfulness, accompanied by beer and peanuts, was enjoyed. We looked forward to going spotlighting with the property's owner.

Despite Barry-Sean's reservations, the spotlighting was wonderful. Seen were - springbok, scrub-hare, eland, steenbok, giraffe, black-backed jackal, South African porcupine, grey duiker, Verreaux's eagle-owl, bat-eared fox, greater kudu, waterbuck and, as we returned to camp, African white-faced owl. The cost of the spotlighting was \$A20 pp. Great value.



Friday 17th August 2012

This driving day started pretty much at the Botswana border post. We were slightly gouged by the car weight tax lass, who was emphatic that our car weighed seven tonnes. She then gave us a very ungenerous currency conversion.

The 550km drive to Maun, the service town for the Okavango Delta, was straightforward on flat sealed roads through the thornveld and semi-desert of the northern Kalahari. Wildlife appeared in cycles. Firstly dozens of steenbok were seen grazing the roadsides. These gave way to many hundreds of yellow-billed hornbills, and later, dozens of red-crested bustards.

We stopped at Ghanzi to buy supplies and get some Botswana Pula. Ghanzi is quite unexciting. We arrived in Maun and managed to get lost. The signposting in Botswana is rather deficient.

Our new home, the Sedia Hotel, is rather magnificent. The campground is less exciting. We found a powered site near the river. The hotel's travel agency, Afro Tracks, managed to squeeze us onto a tour of the Moremi Game Reserve with a group of friendly French and Belgians for the following day. This cost us \$US105 pp for a 12 hour day and included

entry fees and meals. That being sorted, we ate in the restaurant, chatted with the hotel's owners - Alan and Janet - and enjoyed a couple of well-earned lagers.

Saturday 18th August 2012

One of the great wildlife-watching days of all time!

We left the hotel at 0530 in a canopied Landcruiser. It took almost two hours of trying not to freeze to death on a mostly rough unsealed road to get to the reserve's entry gate (South Gate).

Moremi Game Reserve forms part of the Okavango Delta. Myriad rough vehicle tracks cover part of the reserve in a confusing and unplanned fashion. Habitats represented include open and vegetated swamps, mopane woodland (heavily modified by elephants), open grassland, mud or dust pans, thornveld and savanna.

Ten hours were spent in the reserve - three more than promised. Nobody complained. Twenty different mammals were seen. In no particular order, and with approximate numbers, we spotted:

- Slender mongoose (1)
- Vervet monkey (3)
- Elephant (~50)
- Zebra (12)
- Red hartebeest (12)
- Impala (500+)
- Red lechwe (50+)
- Black-backed jackal (2)
- Lion (10)
- African wildcat (1)
- Giraffe (40+)
- Cape buffalo (50+)
- Warthog (6)
- Common duiker (4)
- Spotted hyena (1)
- Hippopotamus (20+)
- Blue wildebeest (30+)
- Great kudu (15)
- Tree squirrel (10), saving the best for last!
- Honey badger (3).

The lions were wonderful as they were on the move. There was one lioness and a whole scrum of mixed-size cubs. Clearly mum had drawn the short straw for the day. Also of note were a huge herd of buffalo. It wasn't possible to accurately estimate numbers as they continued into the forest and on both sides of the road. They seemed pretty relaxed.

The undoubted highlight however, was three separate honey-badger sightings. The first was at 1630 with an animal running across our path and disappearing down a hole. It gave some good views as it popped its head out to confirm we were still looking at it. The second animal was 30 minutes later and right next to the road. This one obliged by glaring at us

before trotting off. A third honey-badger was seen 15 minutes later, again next to the road but we were running out of time to reach the exit before the gate shut.

Others had seen hunting dogs kill an impala in the middle of the campground adjacent to the entry gate.





Sunday 19th August 2012

A much anticipated rest day, with birding around the lodge and along the river bank, writing, chatting, swimming in the excellent pool, shopping, washing, emailing and Siemsing (the art / science of identifying birds long after they've been seen).

At 1700, Alan, the hotel's owner, took us for a very pleasant, educational and complimentary cruise along the Thamalakane River in his boat. We passed the Maun Game Reserve, right on the edge of town, and home to many large mammals. The site is slated for a resort / casino or some such nonsense.

Monday 20th
August 2012

Now, this was a really shit day. Firstly I discovered that I had left my reading glasses in Alan's boat. Naively I expected them to still be there after we took ourselves back to the Moremi Game Reserve. That was my second mistake.



We made Moremi fairly quickly and in a much warmer condition. We started driving about and soon found ourselves following a few other vehicles across some dodgy-looking water crossings. We became very well acquainted with one of these.

Saying to Barry-Sean that I wasn't at all happy crossing our new watery friend had little impact. He had no such concerns and said it would all be good, or words to that effect. Three and a half hours later I was still jacking up wheels and may just have been able to drive out when help arrived. The thought of spending the night(s) in a remote area filled with nasty carnivores did not appeal.



By the time we found ourselves back on the main boggy /sandy / rutted road the day was well and truly ruined. We drove back towards Maun. On the way we stopped at the "foot-and-mouth disease" quarantine gate that we had passed earlier in the day. The numbskull in attendance asked if we had any meat. Yeah, a fridge full of it. "No, of course not", I replied. He then enquired about oranges and bananas. These were in a sealed esky where they had been all day - there being no place beyond the stupid gate where you could buy anything in any event. Yes, we have oranges - here they are. This made him happy. He produced a book and listed each orange before they were thrown away. He failed to check our meat-filled fridge.

On returning to Maun, Barry-Sean went to the grog shop while I waited on the river bank for Alan to return with his boat. My reading glasses were not there. At least Barry-Sean managed to get some beer. Yes, a really crap day.

A young Austrian couple that we had been following around and vice versa came to visit. They told horror stories of the road we were to follow the next day. According to their very new guide book, it was the worst road in Botswana and consisted of a continuous string of holes joined together by dead vehicles. Game on.

Tuesday 21st August 2012

We said goodbye to our friends at the Sedia Hotel. There was Abo, the gay comedian / receptionist, Cindy, the ever-smiling check-in chick and a number of other folk who clearly enjoyed working for Alan and Janet. Our destination was Senyati Safari Camp, just near Kasane and the Zimbabwe / Zambia border, and a little over 600km away.

The journey, over flat, straight and sometimes tedious roads, was incident free. We negotiated several quarantine posts without further drama and a couple of police checkpoints where licenses and forward itineraries needed to be produced. A refueling stop at Nata prepared us for the "road of terror" ahead.

The first section of the subject road wasn't too bad and then it got much better. Confusingly the speed limit fell to 30km/hr as the road widened and became freeway standard. Cars were travelling past at 0.8 the speed of light so we slowly accelerated. The roadwork, when we reached it, was inevitable as we had seen more and more workers' camps beside the road. But who's ever heard of a roadwork - with speed humps - for 40km!

Very few people live along the road from Maun to Nata and then on to Kasane. Indeed wildlife, such as elephants, oryx, impala and the beautiful sable antelope can be seen on the roadsides. A feature of travel in Namibia / Botswana is just how much of the native vegetation appears to be intact. Australian farmers and graziers - hang your heads in shame!

Our arrival at Senyati was a day earlier than schedule and we were thrilled to get the last available campsite. Louw, the owner / manager welcomed us and turned out to be great company. We were to have many chats about the state of things over the next five days. Interestingly it was bucketing down with rain as we drove into camp. This gave the car a well-deserved wash and confused the locals. We were told that it never ever rains in August.

"Lo" organized for us to visit Victoria Falls the next day. Although our Toyota had the necessary accreditation to cross the border we took no interest in all the fees and charges - along with police bribes - that Mr Mugabe's public servants would have extracted from us, had we made the journey ourselves. It made more sense to pay 400 Pula (\$A50) pp and have someone else pick us up and have them worry about it.

Wednesday 22nd August 2012

Stunning Sandra picked us up at the very civilized hour of 0800. With her were two delightful young Spanish folk, who regaled us with horror stories of life in Spain.



The transit through the Botswana People Processing Point was short, smooth and cheerful. Things fell away a bit when we reached Zimbabwe immigration. Here a single window dealt with a growing horde of potential tourists and financial supporters of Robert Mugabe. The \$US30 visa fee was the whole point of the border post. The government couldn't care less who came into the country as long as they paid. We knew this later in the day when it was revealed that Immigration had run out of "exit" forms - so

they waved us through.

On the Zim side we waved goodbye to Sandra for the time being and climbed into a minibus with Tooma(?) at the helm. This cheery chap drove us the 70km to the falls. We had some sort of chance of seeing hunting dogs along the road but luck was not with us.

The \$US30 entry fee for Victoria Falls is worth every cent. We had five hours to spend and the time passed quickly.

There are a few trails through very good forest at the falls with a host of birds and even a few mammals. The falls were in a dry season flow, but still magnificent and a worthy runner-up to Iguassu Falls in Brazil / Argentina. They are more surprising than Iguassu given



their location, in what is a fairly dry environment. Apparently the wet season flow allows viewers to be drowned with spray from the time they leave the car park. No thanks. As it was it was fun to be in a rainforest sustained principally by waterfall spray.



The first birds we saw were the rarest we were to encounter on the holiday - the extremely range restricted and rare black-cheeked lovebirds. Many other birds were added to our list with quite a few not seen elsewhere on our itinerary. Mammals included the very common vervet monkey, warthogs, some elephants (at the top

of the falls on the Zambian side) and a beautiful bushbuck. I prayed for an elephant to do an unrestrained bungee jump, but it wasn't to be.

Also of interest were the other tourists. I've never encountered such a mix of nationalities anywhere. Many different Africans mixed with Europeans, Japanese and other Asians, Kazaks, Indians and people shrouded in tents. And the local guides - mostly Zimbabwean women, and totally bored with waterfalls, were a lot of fun.

The return journey to Botswana was via a giant baobab tree.



the only picture with me in it

We learnt during our short stay in Zim that it wasn't good for your longevity to ask questions about their dear Robert. Or maybe it wasn't good for the locals to answer the questions. In any event it was apparent that nobody much trusted anyone else. I can get that.

After the Zim border folk gave our passports an almighty thump (in lieu of actually looking at them) we were back in the relative civilization of Botswana. Sandra escorted us back to Senyati, where drinks were called at the principal elephant viewing facility. Initially we thought that the 50-odd elephants in attendance was a damn fine effort. The next count had 77, then 117 and finally 180. If this seems unlikely, Lo advised that around 500 is the record. The guys at Senyati have to put grease mixed with chili on the camp's water taps to stop the elephants ripping them off to get at the water.

A dinner of the yummy sausages they do so well in Southern Africa was followed a by a short spotlight drive. This revealed a spotted eagle owl and great close views of a South African bushbaby.

Thursday 23rd August 2012

Omelet for breakfast (thanks B-S) started another excellent day. We had a boat trip on the Chobe River organized for the afternoon so we decided to spend the morning around the lodge and the nearby dirt road that runs along the Zimbabwe border. Enough birds and mammals were seen to keep us amused. These included southern ground hornbills and sable. Also seen were two heavily armed anti-poaching police. Shortly after we chatted with them we heard shots fired...

The Kasane ATM machine was attacked after lunch. We found Charles Mutumba, our guide and boatman while searching for his boat. Linda, his charming and gentle wife, was waiting to go with us as she was learning to be a tour guide.

I gave Charles a wish list of birds and he unhesitatingly explained which were possible and which were not. We set off, a little earlier than schedule. The first site visited was a rookery of waterbirds, downstream from Kasane. This was ridiculous for the number and variety of birds present. It was the most chaotic and spectacular bird rookery I've seen, with egrets, cormorants, spoonbills, storks and various others all nesting side by side in the same trees. A Nile crocodile was seen with an aptly named tiger fish hanging out of its jaws. A yellow-billed stork lurked, hoping to snatch some fish.

We turned and headed upstream and into Chobe National Park. En route we found the shy and elusive white-backed night-heron; next was the rare and range restricted slaty egret. Vast numbers of elephants, buffalo, hippo, waterbuck, lechwe and other mammals were easily seen on the enormous grass-covered flood plain. Puku (antelope) was seen in small numbers; African skimmers were nesting (and skimming), and finally, five lions came to the water's edge to drink. A stunning afternoon!

A BBQ was enjoyed back at Senyati before a short spotlighting session along the nearby border road. A slow start finally gave excellent views of a family of springhares. These bounced about like small kangaroos and finally disappeared down their burrows. A sillier looking animal is difficult to imagine (except for elephant, giraffe, aardvark and a couple of dozen others).



tiger fish



yellow-billed stork



Chobe River rookery



salt lick



Friday 24th August 2012

A pre-dawn spotlight on foot revealed a few spotted hyena. These gave good views as they trotted toward the source of the light - me. Hold on, wildlife is supposed to move away from the spotlight. Is this really happening? Time to move, Steven.

We entered Chobe National Park a little after 0630. We had high hopes of seeing hunting dogs. Again, we didn't. The park is not high on my list of favourites. The vegetation looks terrible, due to a combination of heavy browsing, the dry season and what wasn't there in the first place. Much of the park is quite repetitive to look at. The local animal residents disagree. Buffaloes in the hundreds compete with hordes of elephants, giraffes, myriad antelope, giddy-ups and many other increasingly familiar beasts. The highlights were close views of sable, a single roan (antelope) and thousands of southern carmine bee-eaters which added much colour.





We tried to waste the heat of the day as best we could so that we might be enthusiastic about the late afternoon. We failed. The roads in Chobe are atrocious and just moving along them takes almost all of the driver's concentration, so unless an animal decides to suicide (unlikely) then it is difficult to see anything. Stopping could be dangerous as the car would quickly sink into the sandy road.

We returned to Elephant Central - the preferred beer consumption point at Senyati. Strangely almost no elephants were seen. How do all the various groups of hephalumps (20 or more groups visit Senyati) decide which days they are thirsty and which days they are not? A most enigmatic animal, your elephant. Whilst on the subject of elephants, Botswana is awash with the things. If we hadn't seen a thousand of them we hadn't seen one. Estimates vary, but there are said to be a couple of hundred thousand elephants in the country. Basically anywhere where there is food and not too many annoying people, then there are elephants.

Sleep was blissful aside from the bellowing elephants, screaming hyenas and rampaging honey badgers going through the rubbish bin a metre from my tent.

Saturday 25th August
2012

This was a designated rest day. Despite dire warnings of death by wildlife, I poked about the forested hills around Senyati on foot and picked up a couple of new birds including miombo wren-warbler.



The day warmed quickly and I was soon enjoying the sunshine, chatting and updating notes. Lunch was in Kasane where we spent the rest of our Pula. The afternoon was spent

at the waterhole. Camp "helper" Olivier, a delightful Frenchman, explained life in France and the better life he and his wife were having in Botswana.

Waterhole attendees for the afternoon were: elephants, sable, banded and slender mongoose, giraffes, baboons, impala, black-backed jackals, warthogs and greater kudu.

We said our goodbyes to Lo and his staff. Lo said he had much enjoyed our company. As for us, it is no accident that we spent more nights at Senyati than any other site.



Sunday 26th August 2012

We left Senyati at 0600, heading west and back into Namibia. An African wildcat was seen licking its feet on the side of the road at first light.

The main road traverses Chobe NP. Alas, no hunting dogs were seen and aside from a few southern ground hornbills not much else was seen either. The border and police checkpoints were smoothly negotiated as we started our drive along the Caprivi Strip, a very narrow finger of Namibian land sandwiched between Botswana and Angola. Many Namibian birds make this area their home, so we expected to see changes in the vegetation.

The Caprivi Strip proved to be a disappointment. The area is home to many small communities of poor peasant farmers. It was the only rural area we visited with a significant population. Correspondingly wildlife was scant or absent. The drive became a tad tedious.

Our camp for the night was at Popa Falls, marketed as "Popa Falls Resort". This sounded fantastic. The falls is the most height-challenged I've seen, which is disappointing if you are a waterfall. It reached 0.9 metres. The "resort" aspect tests the limits of credibility. I guess the fact that not a single client was staying in the resort bungalows - in the middle of the peak tourist season - tells its own story.

There is a little decent gallery forest, with quite a few birds, along the banks of the adjacent Okavango River. The sight of a completely naked female European teenage tourist sits more fondly in my memory.

A lazy afternoon chatting to the camp's security guards (who almost outnumbered the campers) was complimented by drinking beer and wine and having the best night's sleep since leaving Australia.

Monday 27th August 2012

Our next stop was Shamvura Lodge, a short distance to the west and on the banks of the Kavango River (not to be confused with the Okavango River), which forms the border with Angola to the north. Stopping at a number of spots along the highway failed to add any of the elusive "Caprivi Strip specialties".

Charlie, wife of Mark, and co-owner of the lodge checked us in. Charlie is such a jolly chatty lass, it was hard to escape. Mark was starkly contrasting. He is the lodge's bird guide and rather fancies his abilities. He may well be an excellent guide but I wasn't about to pay his substantial fee. When Mark discovered that we weren't going to pay for his services he became sullen, which may have been his natural state for all I know.

The lodge has a useful swimming pool and great views from an adjacent deck. A wander onto the river bank added a few migrant and resident birds that live in reeds. Only Mark knew where others might be seen. I wasn't about to ask him for information as I could imagine an argument.

We sat and watched Angola burn down - someone had set fire to the riverside vegetation.

Occasional gunfire was heard. Not a good place for a holiday methinks. At least wanton environmental destruction seems rare in Namibia (unless you're a seal pup.....).

At sunset a pair of African barred owlets



were seen. Just after sunset the thornveld became alive with fiery-necked nightjars along with a single South African bushbaby.

Dinner, again courtesy of Barry-Sean, was mince with curried mixed vegetables and rice.

Tuesday 28th August 2012

Our last long driving day - the 550km stretch to Etosha National Park.

We left Shamvura Lodge at 0540 and although we stopped at a number of birdy sites along the road we failed to make any further impression on a long list of "missed" birds. The drive was fairly uninteresting. The only bit of excitement was having our meat seized (!) at an inspection point. The folk manning the facility told us that we had the option of cooking it. I took the car off the road and hid the best of our steak and bacon and handed over the rest. We were let through.

We had lunch at a Wimpy Burger place at Tsumeb. Originally I thought this was a great idea. I should have known better. At least the burger was well named.

Namutoni Camp in Etosha was reached at 1430. We survived the multiple paperwork points without too much stress - just wonderment at the ridiculous bureaucracy. Convincing the staff that we had already paid for our campsites was the most arduous test. Campsites were not allocated. We found a good site on the vegetated edge of the campground, where we stood some sort of chance of a non-fatal wildlife interaction.

An afternoon drive to Twee Palms Waterhole produced the usual mix of mammals + eight upside-down lions. Despite the extreme slothfulness of the cats, a scrum of vehicles full of tourists watched breathlessly at their every (non) move.

Beer o'clock couldn't come too soon, although I had a sneaking suspicion that remnants of the Namutoni swimming pool were attacking my otherwise pristine throat. The medicine chest was consulted for the first time on the holiday.

Wednesday 29th August 2012

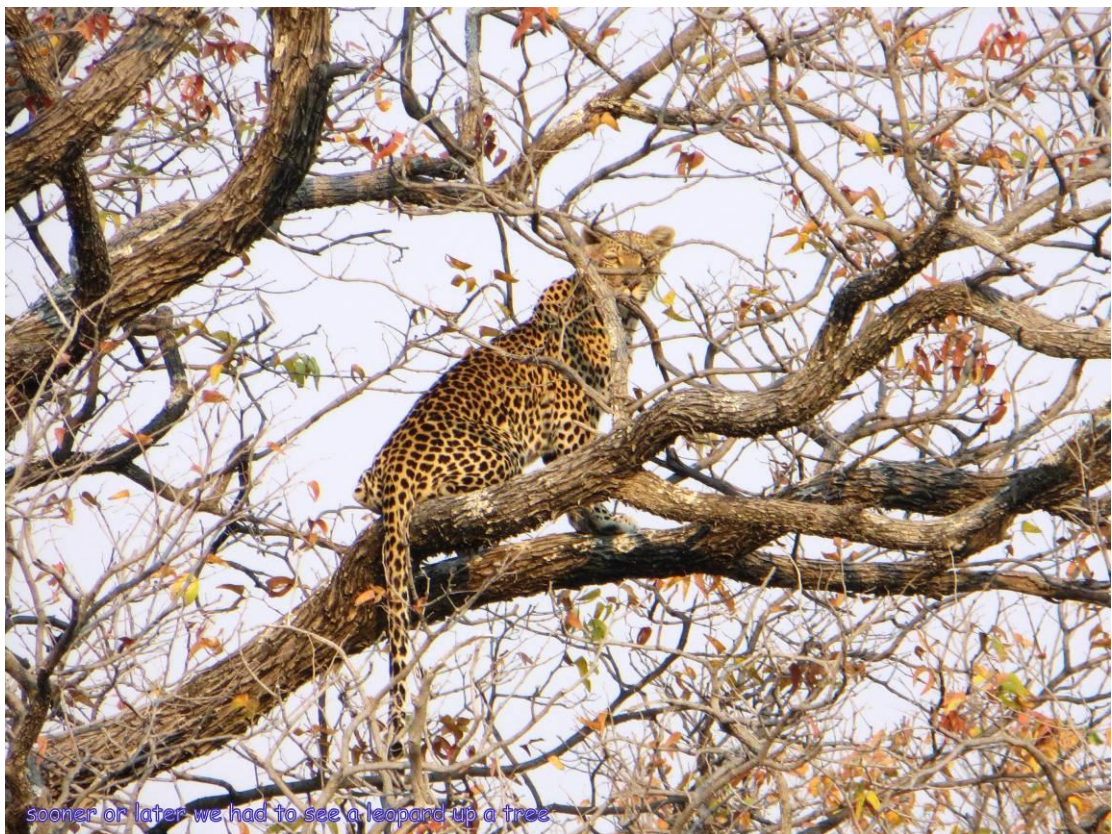
A delicious tomato and egg breakfast preceded our first early morning game drive in Etosha. The park covers an area of 22,000 square kilometers and used to be much larger! We exited the gate at #2 on the grid. All of the vehicles, except us, turned left. We soon found two male lions drinking at Chudop Waterhole and a leopard up a tree on the way to Kalkeuwel Waterhole. The leopard was very well received by the vehicle trailing us, which was full of young German women..... I can think of something fairly witty to write here but I won't. Eventually Barry-Sean, who was becoming well known for his illegal forays out of the car or into areas that he shouldn't stray, exited the vehicle causing the big pussy to exit the tree.

A couple of "new" birds were seen - with double-banded courser and great rufous sparrow, although we soon learnt that Etosha is a tough place to see birds. We seemed to have the best of the mammal sightings as other guides reported nothing of great significance.

The afternoon saw a repeat of the morning's journey. Four eland were at the Kalkeuvel Waterhole and another (or the same?) leopard was seen on its exit road, along with the only Damara dik-diks seen by us in Etosha. These are said to be common. All up it was a sensational day for wildlife spotting!



two thirsty boys



sooner or later we had to see a leopard up a tree

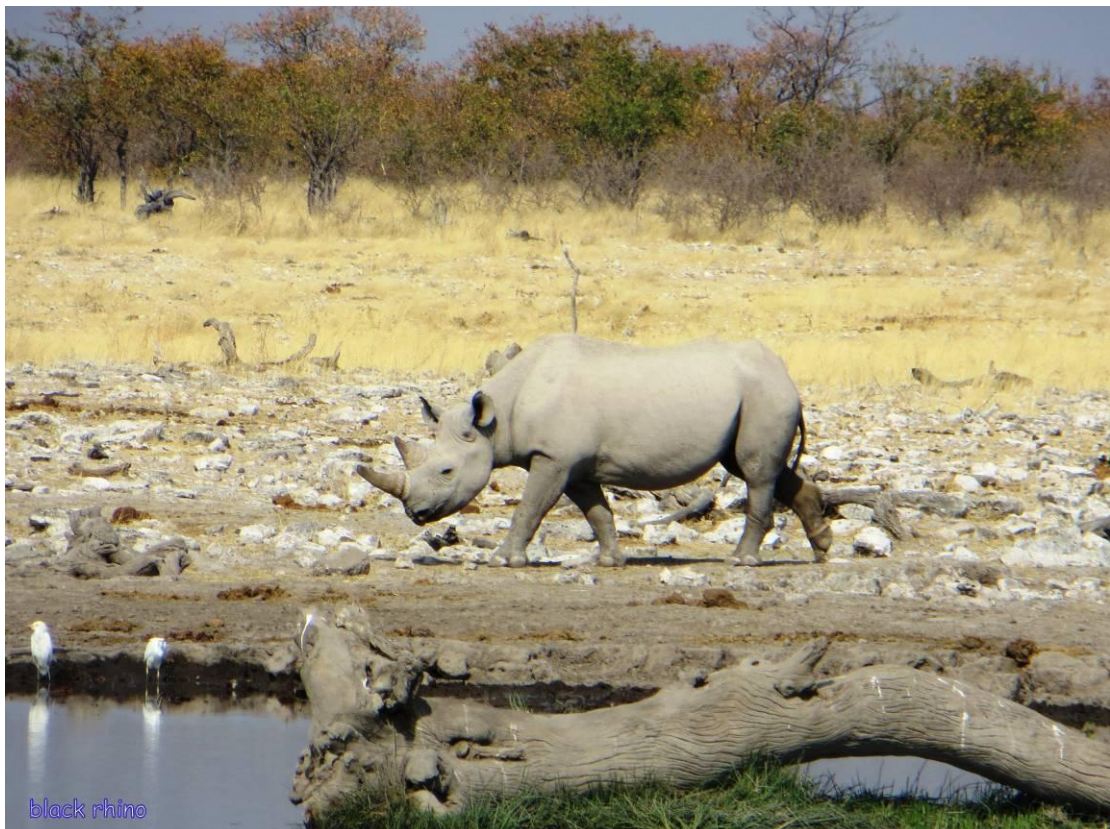
Thursday 30th August 2012

We packed up, had bacon and eggs for breakfast and left Namutoni Camp for Halali Camp, about 50km further west in the park. A wicked sore throat and head full of space aliens dampened my enthusiasm. In reply any interesting (defined as: previously unseen) wildlife refused to show itself.

Arriving at Halali a little after 0900 we found ourselves unable to check in to the campground at that time, according to the gruff greeter at reception. So we strolled up to the Halali Waterhole. Here I contemplated a scenic burial site for myself. A few greater kudu, black-faced impala and the odd giddy-up failed to enthuse.

The campground has 58 sites and less than half were occupied - odd for a place that was said to be fully booked. Halali has good facilities - the best in Etosha. Shade trees are effective and necessary.

At 1330 we went to the Rietfontein Waterhole, which, aside from the "house" waterhole at Okaukuejo, is probably the best in the park for seeing stuff. On arrival we found hundreds of striped giddy-ups, silly looking wildebeest, a mixed all-sorts herd of elephants (including one that practiced yoga), springboks, greater kudu, jackals and lots of birds. Hundreds, or maybe thousands, of sandgrouse came to drink. The excitement award went to a sole black rhino (a new mammal for me!) which slowly wandered in to drink at 1430.



We were still at the waterhole after 1700 just watching and being ignored by the animals. Etosha is a very old national park and it appears that the wildlife is very complacent around vehicles as long as the occupants don't get out. A lesson for you, Barry-Sean.



Friday 31st August 2012

Last year on this day I was enjoying "retirement" drinks at North Sydney. A year on sees me searching for big pussies, with two groups of lion the result.

We started to lose interest in endlessly driving around the park and found ourselves back at Halali Camp by mid-morning.

There is a wonderful wooded koppie behind the campground and overlooking the waterhole. There are a few disused trails running up and around it and these proved to be worthwhile in terms of plant and bird watching, along with the view from the top. A large mixed flock of birds was found on the crest of the hill behind the water tank. The endemic Carp's tit was among these. I've always liked to see new tits.

Back at camp and we were treated to a grey kestrel hunting starlings.

The afternoon game drive was a bit of a fizzer.

Saturday 1st September 2012

Our last campsite for the holiday beckoned - Okaukuejo. On the way we stopped for a dozen lions that lounged, pissed, shat and eventually strolled away at Rietfontein Waterhole. Aside from a couple of Ovampo sparrowhawks, nothing new was seen on the way to camp.

Okaukuejo Camp is reasonably spacious, has good amenities most of the time, and is located next to one of the best and busiest waterholes in Africa. Many folk more learned than me in these matters say it is THE BEST waterhole in Africa. So it was not surprising to find the camp fully booked. We were allocated a campsite, which was regularly checked by guys with pens and scraps of paper.



After an early dinner we sat next to the waterhole and waited for the night shift. A lone elephant, a single giraffe and a dozen jackals were the only attendees until three black rhinos timed their appearance to coincide with Barry-Sean's disappearance. The rhinos, abysmally dumb creatures, kicked a few rocks around and acted as though they had never met another (they come to the same waterhole every night).

Sunday 2nd September 2012

A fairly long early morning game drive to the north-west of the park was a bit lame. Some lying lions were seen as well as a rock monitor. Many of the boreholes shown on the map as having water clearly did not.

Back at camp a little after 1000 and my driving skills, or lack thereof, manifested themselves in a broken rear vision mirror on the Hilux. The holiday was starting to wear me down. Lunches were also starting to get me - tinned corn beef, tomato and cheese.

Okaukuejo Waterhole displayed the usual continuous shuffle of thirsty beasts as they slowly staggered about with a seemingly inexhaustible amount of lethargy. Sometimes a wildebeest or giraffe would arrive at the waterhole, stare at it for an hour or so (or, in extreme cases, the whole afternoon), and then either drink or walk away having forgotten why they had made the journey in the first place.

My lurgy had diminished to the point where I returned to the pool. The afternoon drifted by. My mind had returned to Australia a day or two early. We did our best to drink our remaining alcohol and eat our food.

The evening's waterhole activity started slowly. Then thirty elephants arrived. Two young males fought for hours. One kept trying to mount the other which caused the mountee some alarm. No wonder they fought. A giant eagle owl watched proceedings. Three black rhinos turned up and did what they do best - stand around, drink putrid water and then stand around some more. Terrestrial blubber-gutses came and went; large herds of giddy-ups crowded in and the eagle owl killed a noisy blacksmith plover. At last I got to see something die!

Monday 3rd September 2012

This was our last day "in the field" with a return to Windhoek the next morning.

Although failing in our morning quest to find a cheetah, lions were seen with a recently deceased giddy-up, and pretty much all of the animals and birds we'd found previously were seen again, allowing for many of those "last time I'll ever see that" moments.





rock monitor (*Varanus albigularis*)



Back at camp and car cleaning, swimming and anticipating that first beer were in constant rotation. My head cold had been transferred to someone less deserving so poolside chatting and slothing were able to be fully enjoyed.

We ate and drank our way through the last of our supplies.

Our last waterhole sit event was worth the wait. On sunset a black rhino dropped by. Upon his departure ten lions arrived, drank and then blockaded the waterhole. The checkered bendy-necks stayed their distance. Small herds of striped giddy-ups smelled trouble but appeared to lack the intelligence to avoid it. The lions prostrated themselves as the giddy-ups moved closer to the water. The giddy-up feasting party was interrupted by two white rhinos, which clearly had issues with lions and tried to stomp on them. The lions broke cover too early and the giddy-ups managed to avoid being eaten (bugger).

Ten more black rhinos arrived, including one with a young calf. These guys didn't get along at all well with the lions. Several charges into the pussy pit were made but sadly no blood was spilt. An African wild cat promenaded in front of the appreciative human crowd while the abysmally un-savvy giddy-ups reformed for another shot at being killed. This time it was black rhinos that gave the game away and ran interference for the giddy-ups.

Three elephants turned up along with a string of bendy-necks, yet another lion and the resident giant eagle-owl. A few of the bendy-necks managed to gulp down some water before the lions managed to surround a straggler. They harassed it until it ran away across the rocky ground. Alas, it kept its footing and escaped. One of the black rhinos showed some rare initiative and approached the fence that separates the wildlife from the tourists. A very nice end to our time in Etosha!



Tuesday 4th September 2012

We left Etosha at 0730 and after an uneventful drive, arrived at Windhoek after lunch. After 6300km of faithful service we returned the hire car. African Tracks extracted \$A30 for a new piece of glass for the rear-view mirror - far less than they could have charged. I can thoroughly recommend African Tracks. They were incredibly good to us.

An African Tracks courtesy vehicle took us to Chameleon Backpackers where we settled into our room. I chatted with the owner, an Aussie girl from Griffith, swam in the tiny swimming pool and caught up with my diary. Barry-Sean went trinket shopping.

Of more interest was a long conversation with a guy (who shall remain nameless) who trains the Zimbabwe anti-poaching squad. He explained that virtually all the world demand for rhino horn is from ethnic Vietnamese in Vietnam. The poachers are mostly South African ex-military or police.

Barry-Sean took me to a restaurant called "The Wine Bar" for a celebratory dinner. We watched the sun set on Windhoek and our holiday. The meal was very good and the wine even better. One of the restaurant's other customers, a local newspaper journalist, drove us back to the lodge.

Wednesday 5th September 2012

African Tracks took us to the airport for our 1220 flight to Johannesburg. This left and arrived early. Very cheap duty free single malts were procured at Jo'burg.

Our connecting Qantas flight to Sydney was pretty full. The service was atrocious - absolutely embarrassing. They ran out of food, and ran out of the overnight kits (masks, water etc) and made jokes about it! I can understand why people don't fly with Qantas.

Never mind, Sydney Airport treated us kindly, as did Cityrail. Now all I have to do is sleep.

I managed to get to sleep okay, but when Mayette came to bed an hour later I thought she was a zebra coming in to drink. Methinks I'd spent too much time looking at waterholes.....

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16th September 2012
all enquiries welcome



BIRD and MAMMAL LISTS

The numbers **in the columns** refers to the “**day number**” of the trip that the bird or mammal was first seen an each site. Common birds may be under-recorded.

Se – Sesriem (Namib-Naukluft NP)

Bl - Blutkoppie (Namib-Naukluft NP)

WS – Walvis Bay / Swakopmund / Cape Cross

Ze – Zelda Game and Guest Farm

Ma – Maun / Moremi Game Reserve

Sy – Senyati Safari Lodge / Chobe NP / Victoria Falls

PS - Popa Falls / Shamvura Lodge

Et - Etosha NP

	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
Ostrich	1	3			10	14	19	21
White-faced Whistling-Duck					11	16		
White-backed Duck					12			
Comb Duck						16		
Egyptian Goose			5		10	15		
South African Shelduck	2							21
Spur-winged Goose					11	16		
African Pygmy-Goose					12			
Yellow-billed Duck					11			
Cape Shoveler			5					
Red-billed Duck			5		11	16		21
Cape Teal			5					24
Southern Pochard					11			
Helmeted Guineafowl		3	6	7	10	15		21
Crested Francolin					11	16	20	21
Orange River Francolin					11			
Red-billed Francolin				7	11			21
Swainson's Francolin						14		
Little Grebe					11	17		21
Eared Grebe			5					
Greater Flamingo	2		5					

	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
Lesser Flamingo			5					
Northern Giant-Petrel			6					
White-chinned Petrel			6					
African Openbill					10	16	20	
White Stork						16		
Saddle-billed Stork					11			
Marabou Stork	1				10	16		
Yellow-billed Stork					11	16		
Cape Gannet			6					
Great Cormorant			5		10	16		
Cape Cormorant			5					
Bank Cormorant			5					
Long-tailed Cormorant					11	15	19	
Crowned Cormorant			6					
African Darter					10	16		
Great White Pelican			5					
Hamerkop			5		10	14	20	
Gray Heron			5		11	15		24
Black-headed Heron						15		
Purple Heron					10	16		
Great Egret					10	16		
Intermediate Egret			5			16		24
Little Egret			5			15		
Slaty Egret						16		
Black Heron					11	16		
Cattle Egret					10	16		24
Squacco Heron					10	16		
Rufous-bellied Heron							20	
Striated Heron					12	16	20	
Black-crowned Night-Heron						16	19	
White-backed Night-Heron						16		
Glossy Ibis					11	16		
Sacred Ibis					10	16		
Hadada Ibis					11	15		
African Spoonbill					11	16		
Black-shouldered Kite	1		5	7			21	
Black Kite					10	15	20	21
African Fish-Eagle					11	16	19	
Hooded Vulture						17		
White-backed Vulture	1			7		16	21	21

	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
Lappet-faced Vulture		3						
Black-breasted Snake-Eagle		3						
Bateleur				7	11	17	19	22
African Marsh-Harrier					11		20	23
Black Harrier	1							
African Harrier-Hawk							19	
Pale Chanting-Goshawk	1	3		7			21	
Gabar Goshawk						16		21
Little Sparrowhawk							19	
Ovampo Sparrowhawk								25
Augur Buzzard	3							
Jackal Buzzard				8		17		21
Verreaux's Eagle	3							
Martial Eagle				7		16	20	22
Secretary-bird		3			14			21
Eurasian Kestrel	3	3						
Greater Kestrel	2	3	5					24
Dickinson's Kestrel				13				
Red-necked Falcon		3						
Grey Kestrel								24
Lanner Falcon		4				16		
Peregrine Falcon		4						
Kori Bustard					13	17		21
Ludwig's Bustard	2	4		7				
Rueppell's Bustard	1	3						
Red-crested Bustard				8	10	17		21
White-quilled Bustard				7	10			21
Black Crake					12	16		
Purple Swamphen								21
Eurasian Moorhen			5					21
Red-knobbed Coot			5					
Wattled Crane					11			
Water Thick-knee					12	15		
Spotted Thick-knee				8				
Long-toed Lapwing						15		
Blacksmith Plover			5	7	10	14	20	21
White-headed Lapwing						15		
Crowned Lapwing				7	10	15		21
Wattled Lapwing						15		
Black-bellied Plover			5					

	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
Kentish Plover			5					
Common Ringed Plover			5					
Three-banded Plover	2				10	15		21
White-fronted Plover			5					
Chestnut-banded Plover			5					
Black-winged Stilt	2				10	16		21
Pied Avocet			5					
African Jacana					10	16		21
Common Sandpiper			5	9	11	14		23
Common Greenshank			5		10			
Common Redshank						18		21
Whimbrel					11			
Eurasian Curlew			5					
Bar-tailed Godwit			5			16		
Ruddy Turnstone			5					
Red Knot			5					
Little Stint								22
Curlew Sandpiper			5					
African Snipe					11			
Burchell's Courser	2							
Double-banded Courser								22
Collared Pratincole					11	16		
Rock Pratincole						16		
Greater Painted-snipe						18		
Hartlaub's Gull			5					
Kelp Gull			5					
Caspian Tern			5					
Great Crested Tern			6					
African Skimmer						16		
Namaqua Sandgrouse	2	3		7				22
Double-banded Sandgrouse				7				
Burchell's Sandgrouse					10			
Speckled Pigeon	2		5					
Red-eyed Dove							19	
Ring-necked Dove	1	3	5	9	10	14	19	21
Laughing Dove	1	4	5	7	10	16	19	22
Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove					11	15	19	
Namaqua Dove	2	3	5	7	11	14	19	22
Black-cheeked Lovebird						15		
Meyer's Parrot					11		20	22

	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
Gray Go-away-bird	1			7	10	15	19	21
Coppery-tailed Coucal					11			
Senegal Coucal					11		21	
Southern White-faced Owl				9				
Spotted Eagle-Owl						15		
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl				9				23
Pearl-spotted Owlet				9	11	16		22
African Barred Owlet							20	
Fiery-necked Nightjar							20	
African Swift						15		
Little Swift						16		24
African Palm-Swift		6	8	10				21
White-backed Mousebird	1	3	5					
Red-faced Mousebird				9	11	18	20	
Malachite Kingfisher						16		
Gray-headed Kingfisher						16		
Striped Kingfisher					10			
Giant Kingfisher						15	19	
Pied Kingfisher					10	16	19	
White-fronted Bee-eater						15		
Little Bee-eater					11	17	20	
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	2		5	7		15		21
Southern Carmine Bee-eater					11	17	20	
Lilac-breasted Roller				8	10	14	20	23
Rufous-crowned Roller		4		7				21
Eurasian Hoopoe				8	10			23
Green Woodhoopoe					11	15		
Violet Woodhoopoe								24
Common Scimitar-bill				8				21
Southern Red-billed Hornbill					11	15		
Damara Red-billed Hornbill								21
Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	1			7	10	14		21
Crowned Hornbill						15		
Bradfield's Hornbill					10	15	19	
African Gray Hornbill				8	10	16	19	
Trumpeter Hornbill						15		
Southern Ground-Hornbill						16		
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird							20	22
Pied Barbet	1	3		7	10		20	22
Black-collared Barbet					12	15	20	

	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
Ashy Tit		3		8				
Yellow-bellied Greenbul						15	19	
Terrestrial Brownbul						15	19	
Common Bulbul						15	19	
Black-fronted Bulbul	1	3	5	8	11		19	21
Red-faced Crombec						15		
Cape Crombec		4		8	11		20	22
Sedge Warbler							20	
African Reed-Warbler							20	
Lesser Swamp-Warbler			5					
Little Rush-Warbler							20	
Yellow-breasted Apalis					15			
Green-backed Camaroptera					15	19	20	22
Miombo Wren-Warbler						18		
Rufous-eared Warbler	3							
Red-faced Cisticola					15			
Rattling Cisticola				10				
Gray Cisticola			8					
Winding Cisticola						19		
Zitting Cisticola			5					
Desert Cisticola	3							
Tawny-flanked Prinia						15		
Black-chested Prinia	2	3	5	8			20	21
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	3	3		8				27
Greencap Eremomela						15	20	
Yellow-rumped Eremomela	3			8				
Burnt-neck Eremomela					11			
Rufous-vented Warbler	2		5	8			20	23
African Yellow White-eye						15	19	
Cape White-eye			6					
Hartlaub's Babbler					11			
Black-faced Babbler								
Southern Pied-Babbler				8				
Arrow-marked Babbler					10	15	20	
Pale Flycatcher					12		20	
Chat Flycatcher			7					
Mariqua Flycatcher			7	8	10			21
Ashy Flycatcher						15		
Kalahari Scrub-Robin	1			8				22
Red-backed Scrub-Robin					12			

	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
Herero Chat		4						
White-throated Robin-Chat					12	15	19	
Short-toed Rock-Thrush	3							
Stonechat					11	16		
Southern Anteater-Chat		4		9				
White-headed Black-Chat							19	
Karoo Chat	1							
Tractrac Chat		4	5					
Familiar Chat	2	4	5	9				
Mountain Wheatear	2	3						
Capped Wheatear					11			
Groundscraper Thrush	1			8			19	22
Kurrichane Thrush						17	20	
Wattled Starling					10			
Cape Glossy-Starling	1			7	12	14	20	22
Greater Blue-eared Glossy-Starling						16		
Meves's Glossy-Starling					11			
Burchell's Glossy-Starling				8	10	16	19	22
Violet-backed Starling							19	
African Pied Starling					12			
Red-winged Starling						15		
Pale-winged Starling	2	3	6					
Red-billed Oxpecker					11	15		22
Yellow-billed Oxpecker						18		
Collared Sunbird						15	20	
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	1			8		15	20	
Mariqua Sunbird								22
White-breasted Sunbird					12	16	20	
Dusky Sunbird	3	3	5					22
Cape Wagtail			5	9				
African Pied Wagtail						15		
African Pipit				9				
Buffy Pipit								23
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting								22
Cape Bunting		3						
Golden-breasted Bunting				8		20		22
Yellow-fronted Canary						20		
Black-throated Canary								22
Yellow Canary	2			8				
White-throated Canary		3						22

	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
House Sparrow	1		5	9				25
Great Rufous Sparrow								22
Cape Sparrow	2	4	5					
Southern Gray-headed Sparrow				9	10	14	19	23
Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver				8	10	15	19	22
Scaly Weaver	2							22
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	1			7	11	15		22
Social Weaver	2			8				25
Red-headed Weaver							20	
Holub's Golden-Weaver						15		
Southern Brown-throated Weaver					10		20	
Southern Masked-Weaver	2		5	8				
Red-billed Quelea	2			9	11	15	19	21
Common Waxbill					13		20	
Black-cheeked Waxbill			7	9	13			22
Blue-breasted Cordonbleu					10	14	19	22
Violet-eared Waxbill				8		18	19	21
Green-winged Pytilia				8			20	23
Red-billed Firefinch					10	15		
Jameson's Firefinch						15	19	
Red-headed Finch								21
Broad-tailed Paradise-Whydah						18		
Village Indigobird						15		

Mammals	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
Chacma Baboon	1		7		13	15		
Vervet Monkey					11			
South African Bushbaby						15	20	
Cape Hare		3						
Scrub Hare		4		7				
Cape Ground Squirrel	2			9				24
Tree Squirrel					10		20	22
Springhare						16		
South African Porcupine				9				
Four-striped Grass Mouse	2	5						
Dassie Rat	3							
Acacia Mouse		4						
Black-backed Jackal	1	3	5	8	11	15		21
Bat-eared Fox				9		15		

	Se	Bl	WS	Ze	Ma	Sy	PS	Et
Honey Badger					11	14		
Slender Mongoose					11		18	25
Yellow Mongoose		3						
Banded Mongoose					13	18		21
Meerkat				8				
Spotted Hyena					11	16		23
Aardwolf	1							
African Wild Cat					11	18		27
Leopard								22
Lion					11	16		21
Cape Fur-Seal			6					
Rock Dassie	1	3						
African Elephant					11	14		22
Black Rhino								23
Southern White Rhino								27
Common Zebra	1				11	16		21
Hartmann's Mountain Zebra		3						
Hippopotamus					11	16	20	
Warthog	1			7	11	15		21
Giraffe		3		9	11	15		21
Blue Wildebeest	1				11			21
Red Hartebeest					11			22
Common Duiker				9	10			
Damara Dik-dik								22
Steenbok				9	10	14		22
Springbok	1	3	5	7				21
Impala					11	15		
Black-faced Impala								21
Roan Antelope						17		
Sable Antelope						14		
Southern Oryx	1	4	5	7	13			21
Cape Buffalo					11	15		
Bushbuck						15		
Greater Kudu	1			7	11	15		22
Eland				7				22
Waterbuck				7		16		
Puku						16		
Red Lechwe					11	16		