

Central Northern Namibia – April 2012

Report by Sjöf Öllers

Introduction

This tour was my first visit to Namibia. I wanted to do a relaxed trip with limited driving distances so the tour was restricted to the Erongo mountains, Brandberg, Rustig Toko Lodge near Kamanjab, Etosha and Waterberg. While the paucity of trip reports suggests that April is not a good month to visit Namibia, I was pleasantly surprised with the number of birds and mammals that we saw: about 45 mammals and a little more than 200 bird species. Mammal highlights were aardvark!, aardwolf, four porcupines, honey badger and a failed lion hunt with some spectacular playfighting between the lions after the hunt. I saw most of the birds that I wanted see including white-tailed shrike, Rüppel's Korhaan, Rüppel's parrot, violet wood hoopoe, Monteiro's and Damara hornbill, pink-billed lark, rockrunner, bare-cheeked and southern pied babbler, and an unexpected bonus in the form of a male long-tailed paradise whydah in full regalia. Other goodies were pygmy falcon, Ludwig's bustard, marsh owl, white-faced and African scops owl, pearl-spotted owlet, three sandgrouse species, pririt batis, bronze-winged courser, barred wren-warbler and white-crested helmetshrike. I only dipped on Herero chat, black-faced babbler and Bradfield's hornbill.



Violet Wood Hoopoe

Travel Arrangements and Timing

Due to unforeseen circumstances it was very much a last-minute decision to go to Namibia, so I went there with little preparation. I contacted Birding Africa to make the bookings, because I wasn't sure whether it would be easy to get accommodation over Easter and I didn't have time to do it myself anyway. Marje Hemp from Birding Africa managed to get all the bookings at the dates we wanted and also made valuable suggestions to further optimize our tour schedule. Recommended.

If you browse through the usual websites for trip reports to Namibia in April you won't find much. So I was prepared for pleasant weather but challenging viewing conditions. The rains had been normal this year so the landscape still was quite green and lush in most places. As a result the grass was still high in many of the places that we visited, which indeed made finding and seeing the smaller mammals a challenge. Many bird species were still in their breeding plumage or had at least not all changed to eclipse plumage. Finding most of the Namibian (semi)endemics proved to be relatively easy. The weather was superb, 23-33 degrees Celsius in daytime and 12-18 degrees Celsius at night. We had the occasional refreshing shower or thunderstorm in the afternoon (or at night) in Etosha.



Black-backed Jackals

In Etosha many of the waterholes that are considered top sites in the winter/dry season (Goas, Rietfontein, Kalkheuwel, both Okevi sites, etc.) were pretty much useless for game viewing. There were temporary pools everywhere so animals were not tied to the man-made waterholes; you basically had to keep driving and

hope for animals to cross the road or stop for a drink at roadside pools. The Okakuejo area had moderate wildlife numbers. The Okondeka waterhole had a constant flow of mammals and birds coming to drink with the Okondeka lion pride in permanent attendance. But otherwise mammal viewing was only moderately exciting in this area. In hindsight it would probably have been better to stay two night at Okakuejo and three at Namutoni and not vice versa. Cheetahs seemed difficult to find throughout the park (at least when we were there). Only a few people seemed to have seen them. We didn't see them. The mopane woodland around Halali wasn't that great for mammalwatching. Impalas and giraffes were seen quite regularly, but otherwise mammals were very scarce. More towards the west (Rietfontein) there were moderate numbers. Rietfontein always had a few zebras and springbok plus the odd impala but not much else. Our night-drive guide at Halali told us that most of the mammals move away from the Halali area in the rainy season because the conditions are not very attractive for them (very muddy), but animals had now starting returning. In particular kudu seemed completely absent; we saw only one female kudu during our seven-night stay in the park. Nevertheless, we had some of our best mammal sightings in the Halali area (bat-eared fox, Cape fox, porcupine and honey badger were only seen here). Leopard was seen at least once a day in the direct vicinity of Halali Camp (judging from the visitor book entries), but we didn't see one. The Namutoni area was teeming with wildlife. Here were the largest antelope concentrations, but also smaller mammals and predators seemed more visible/active here. A highlight was an impressive congregation of giraffes a few kilometers north of the camp in the Okevi/Andoni direction.



Lions near Gaseb in Etosha

Accommodation

Erongo Wilderness Lodge: the tents have been rebuilt and are now much larger with a design that allows more light in. The restaurant overlooks a more open area with a waterhole, which usually attracts birds in daytime and the occasional mammal at night and around dawn/dusk. The location is beautiful and the two guides we had were both good. The food was good too, but it should be in this price range. The birding around the tents, reception and restaurant is excellent, but it is worth walking the trails as well, for both scenery and encounters with more shy species. Larger mammals are scarce but Damara dik dik, klipspringer, dassie rat, and chacma baboon seem fairly common.



Klipspringer (Erongo Wilderness Lodge)

Brandberg White Lady Lodge: nice location near the confluence of two (usually dry) riverbeds, but the layout is a bit odd giving the place a deserted feel. The chalets and campsites are spread out over a large area (almost a square kilometer) and all accommodation is at least 200-300 meters from the restaurant/reception. The chalets are small and quite basic, but clean and they have a veranda where you can sit and relax or do some birding. Opposite the restaurant is a small garden area with several pools/sprinklers/etc. that attract birds, in particular in the morning (even Namaqua sandgrouse on the last morning). The food is basic fair but fine.

Rustig Toko Lodge: for me the hidden gem of the tour. Simple but comfortable rooms and a pleasant and easy-going atmosphere. The food was good and our hostess always made sure we were doing well. The birding here was as good as

or possibly even better than at Erongo, because apart from thick thorn bush, low rocky dolomite hills and a lush garden with well-visited feeders, they also have open grassland areas. This variety of habitats ensures excellent birding. For quite a lot of birds I had my only or best views here. Larger mammals are scarce, but night drives can be good with porcupine, bat-eared fox, springhare, African wild cat, little spotted genet, aardvark, aardwolf, etc. Even pangolin is seen every now and then. Sightings of the larger cats (caracal, leopard, serval and cheetah) and brown hyena are rare. One or two owl species seem almost guaranteed on the night drives.

Etosha: nothing new to report on the camps here, Okakuejo suffers from being the main camp with a lot more tour busses, overlanders, etc. As a result it can be a bit too busy. The reception was a little bureaucratic (telling us at 12.54 that we couldn't get our room keys until 13.00 sharp despite the fact that the room was ready). The service at the restaurant varied from lackluster to incompetent to overenthusiastic. Halali was much nicer, because it feels more intimate and relaxed and the staff has much more of a "can do" mentality. The food was similar to Okakuejo, but it was much better prepared and showed more creativity. Namutoni has a slightly weird setup and organization that is somehow quite charming though. The shops in the Etosha camps were not as well stocked with food as those in Kgalagadi or Kruger. Lots of meat for the braai, ice cream and bread seem guaranteed in all three camps, but that's about it. Halali was the best of the three. Night drives are expensive (at about 60 euro), but we were lucky enough to have a good night drive at Halali. I was surprised how popular the night drives were given the cost.

Waterberg: another place with an odd layout. At the base of the plateau is the reception and camp site, about halfway up is the restaurant and pool, and about 2/3 up is the accommodation. I had already read in the Bradt travel guide that this place often used for conferences and events and we were lucky to have both a wedding and conference during the weekend that we were there. Because the distances between the reception, restaurant and accommodation are just a little too large for most people, there is a lot of driving between the three places, which made birding on the main road not very attractive. If you book accommodation here, try to get the newer and larger chalets. The newer chalets look much nicer (private parking and seating area, bigger rooms, and most of them at more attractive locations than the old rooms). Probably because the chalets were already booked by the wedding and conference participants they put us in the older rooms, which looked tired, but were reasonably clean. My bed must have had fleas though, because I picked up some fleabites during my stay there. The place doesn't quite feel like being in a national park, more something like a cross between a holiday park and youth camp. That said, the birding is good and the trails are much quieter, so it is possible to get away from the crowds when it's busy. Apart from the trails, which can easily be walked in an afternoon and morning if you are reasonably fit, there is not much to do around the camp, but you can take a gamedrive up the plateau, which is what we did. The access road (the D2512) often has excellent birding and is well worth exploring.

Itinerary

Day 1, April 7:	Arrival Windhoek - Erongo Wilderness Lodge
Day 2, April 8:	Erongo Wilderness Lodge
Day 3, April 9:	Erongo Wilderness Lodge - Brandberg
Day 4, April 10:	Brandberg
Day 5, April 11:	Brandberg - Rustig Toko Lodge
Day 6, April 12:	Rustig Toko Lodge
Day 7, April 13:	Etosha - Okakuejo
Day 8, April 14:	Etosha - Okakuejo
Day 9, April 15:	Etosha - Okakuejo
Day 10, April 16:	Etosha - Halali
Day 11, April 17:	Etosha - Halali
Day 12, April 18:	Etosha - Namutoni
Day 13, April 19:	Etosha - Namutoni
Day 14, April 20:	Etosha - Waterberg national park
Day 15, April 21:	Waterberg national park
Day 16, April 22:	Waterberg – Windhoek – Flight to Europe



Just a very cool grasshopper

Day-to-Day Diary

Day 1, April 7: Arrival Windhoek – Erongo Wilderness Lodge

After an uneventful direct flight from Frankfurt with Air Namibia my friend Henk and I arrived in Windhoek around 5.45 am. The only cash machine (Windhoek Bank) at the airport did not accept our cards, which was a little silly. We were greeted by a representative of the car rental company and together with a Swiss/German family we were transferred to their office in Windhoek. After completing the paperwork and a quick check of the car we were good to go. It took us a quarter of an hour to get our bearings in Windhoek city centre and after a fuel stop and buying some water and snacks we headed north on the B1. At Okahandja we made a longer stop for breakfast and got some cash. FNB and Standard Bank proved to be reliable choices to get money throughout the tour.

Birding en route to the Erongo mountains was quite good, but we never really stopped for a proper birding session and I mostly ticked off common birds while driving. Mammalwatching mainly involved ticking off road kills on the B2 to Karibib and the C33 to Omaruru, and included black-backed jackal, ground squirrel, aardwolf and a freshly killed Cape fox (and also a rufous-cheeked nightjar).

Around 1 pm we arrived in Erongo. After installing ourselves in our tents and taking a break I headed out for a quick exploratory walk on the trail that passes along the waterhole in front of the restaurant. I quickly found Monteiro's hornbill, plum-colored starling, rosy-faced lovebird, acacia pied barbet, green-winged pytilia and black-faced waxbill. On my walk back I saw my first white-tailed shrike. Good start. Around the reception we found a dassie rat.

Still a bit tired from the overnight flight we decided to join the short sundowner walk to the top of the rocks opposite the lodge. The views from the top are great. We saw a couple of black eagles soar in the distance and a mountain wheatear on the rocks below us. Hartlaub's francolin was calling but we couldn't find the birds. After the excellent dinner we were both too tired and skipped a spotlighting walk.

Day 2, April 8: Erongo Wilderness Lodge

Next morning there were fifteen people interested in walking the Eagle Trail. Just when we were about to start, our guide noticed three Hartlaub's spurfowl scurrying around the generator house opposite the reception. Nice to get them the easy way. The birding was easy and good with among others barred wren-warbler, Carp's tit, long-billed crombec, a late great spotted cuckoo, black-faced and violet-eared waxbill, Cape and cinnamon-breasted bunting, white-browed scrub robin, and white-tailed shrike. The Eagle Trail is an excellent walk with superb views over the Erongo Mountains. Despite the large group we saw several interesting mammals (a pair of klipspringers, a family group of Damara dik dik and the only male kudu of the trip). On our climb up on one of the hills we found a perched subadult African hawk-eagle, a rockrunner and another

klipspringer. Towards the end of the hike an adult black eagle, a rock monitor lizard, a sand snake species (not seen by me) and a sand frog were added.

After the brunch (with dassie rat around the restaurant) it was only 10.30am and Henk and I made another short walk and we saw black eagle, white-tailed shrike, grey hornbill, great sparrow and swallow-tailed bee-eater.



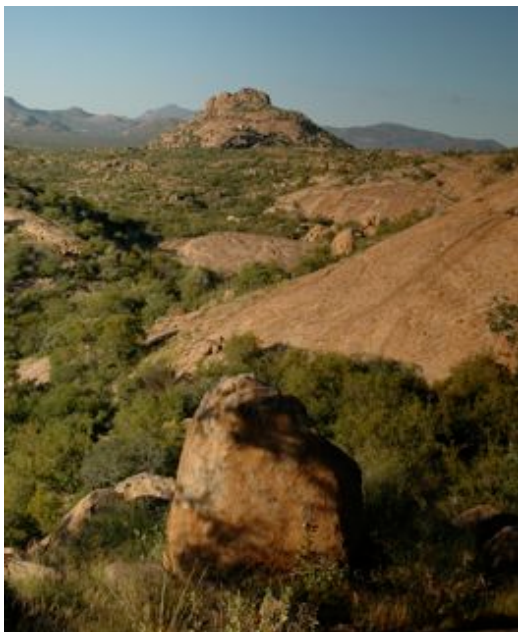
White-tailed Shrike

Henk and I were the only ones to take the afternoon nature drive to Paula's cave, which is well worth doing and leads through a variety of habitats. On the way to the cave we had excellent views of a family of klipspringers, a subadult oryx and another dassie rat. Things got exciting for a moment when we saw rather fresh tracks of a brown hyena, but of course we didn't see the animal. The drive was very birdy and interesting additions were Klaas's cuckoo, lesser grey shrike, red-crested korhaan, augur buzzard, plus a fly-by bird that was probably a violet wood hoopoe.

At the cave we flushed a barn owl that turned out to be nesting there. We had our sundowner drinks at the cave and walked back to the car. Unfortunately the drive back was not via the same route but via a very rocky route in the other direction. Despite spotlighting with two lights we didn't see much: only a scrub hare and a Damara dik dik. Strangely not a single owl or nightjar. It was full moon though. A quick night walk along the entrance road after dinner only yielded a small spotted genet and a possible bibron gecko.

Day 3, April 9: Erongo Wilderness Lodge – Brandberg

This morning we walked another trail (I think it was the Baboon Trail). Things were a bit slow in the beginning, but then our guide spotted two western rock elephant shrews (probably a female with a youngster). Things then got going and we picked up a group of baboons, klipspringer, dassie rat and we almost literally stumbled over a scrub hare at his day roost. The birding only got interesting during the second part of the walk when we hit several good bird parties. Best sightings were pririt batis, long-billed crombec, golden-breasted bunting and Monteiro's hornbill. At a small pool of water we found chestnut weaver, red-headed finch, lark-like bunting, shaft-tailed whydah, and violet-eared waxbill. Closer to the lodge we first found two Burchell's sandgrouse on the ground about 25 meters away but a few steps further two more flew off from under our feet.



Landscape Erongo



Rosy-faced Lovebird

After a last excellent breakfast we said goodbye. On our way out we saw a couple of Damara dik diks. We initially drove at moderate speeds stopping for birds along the way. Some goodies were white-backed and lappet-faced vulture, martial eagle, African hawk eagle, and northern black korhaan. About halfway we realized that our progress had been too slow, so I did not stop very much on the second half. When we arrived at Brandberg White Lady Lodge, it was quite hot, so we took a break until about 4pm. In the afternoon we walked along the dry riverbeds but the birding was very disappointing and no mammals were seen. Best sightings were bearded woodpecker, acacia pied barbet and a spotted eagle owl at dusk.

Day 4, April 10: Brandberg

When I got up and got outside on the veranda I found a single bare-cheeked babbler perched on a dead tree in front of our chalet. In the tree next to the

chalet I saw two Layard's tit-babblers. The only bokmakierie of the trip was seen at the restaurant when we walked over there to have breakfast.

After breakfast we drove to the Brandberg Mountain Centre. Springbok, capped wheatear and Namaqua sandgrouse were seen on the way in. At the mountain centre you have to take an obligatory guide to walk to the white lady paintings. The guide's "we are all cool dudes, aren't we" approach upon arrival wasn't very promising. I told him I was interested in birds and mammals, and despite the fact that he knew his birds and mammals quite well, he wasn't interested in birding. So I basically lagged behind Henk and the guide most of the time to do some birding on my own. The birding in the valley was very enjoyable. Rosy-faced lovebird, swallow-tailed bee-eater, Cape and lark-like bunting, mountain wheatear, common waxbill and bokmakierie (heard only) were some of the species recorded. I played the song and call of Herero chat a few times but got no response. Rock hyraxes (Kaokoveld subspecies) are common in the valley.

The rock paintings are ok, but it is also a bit of a tourist trap. At the rock paintings there is a shaded seating area and there our guide slowly but surely tried to get us interested in "more guiding and pay a little extra". I already felt where this was going. We politely declined his first attempts, but then he decided to try for the all-or-nothing option. He would guide us around the Brandberg mountain all afternoon and show us around (school and village visits, culture, nature, scenery, it would include everything). This started to feel like the "surprise" bazar visits on a budget Morocco or Turkey tour. I told him we already had different plans for the afternoon and when he realized that we wouldn't accept his offers, he got up and basically raced back to the mountain centre ahead of us. After an awkward goodbye from the guide we left the place (also because two large trucks with overlanders had just arrived and had taken over the place). A shame really, because the valley is beautiful with excellent scenery, but I won't go back to this place. On the way out I tried for Herero chat twice but got no response, but a female steenbok was a nice distraction after this frustrating morning.

After lunch it was very hot. I was hanging around our chalet a bit, where I found a tree that was packed with birds hiding from the sun. Mainly familiar chats and Cape glossy starlings but also two bru bru bush-shrikes, Layard's tit-babbler, black-chested prinia, and bleating warbler.

Between 3.30 and 5 pm we strolled across the camping area but more inland away from the riverbed. Birding still was not very exciting, but there was a bit more activity than yesterday. Mostly very common birds though. Monteiro's and yellow-billed hornbill, two flushed brown-hooded kingfishers and the rather cool Ovambo tree skink were the most interesting sightings. No mammals again.

In the late afternoon we slowly drove the road from the lodge to the mountain centre, but apart from a bachelor group springboks, white-backed mousebird, Namaqua sandgrouse, lesser grey shrike and trac-trac chat not much was seen. The spotlighting back to the lodge turned up nothing at all.

Day 5, April 11: Brandberg – Rustig Toko Lodge

In the early morning I made a last walk across the camping area to the dry riverbed, but again the birding was very disappointing. A male golden-tailed woodpecker was the only bird of note. Things were more exciting in the garden of the restaurant, where Namaqua sandgrouse, grey-backed sparrowlark and lark-like bunting (among others) came to drink.

After breakfast we drove back slowly towards the C35. The birds decided to cooperate this time. On the access road to the lodge we quickly picked up Ludwig's bustard and soon after our first but distant couple of Rüppel's korhaan. Back on the D2359 we picked up a total of six Rüppel's korhaan, but this time right next to the road. Another good sighting was tractrac chat (this time with clear views of the white rump at close range when it flew up).



Rüppel's Korhaan (Brandberg)

Spike-heeled lark and Benguela long-billed lark were picked up near the turn-off D2359/C35. The first stretch on the C35 until the bridge over the Ugab River is quite scenic and was very birdy. Another couple of Rüppel's korhaan was seen along the road, plus many Benguela long-billed larks, red-crested korhaan, a black-breasted snake-eagle, several swift and swallow species and a variety of more common roadside birds. The stretch between the Ugab River and the Khorixas turn-off was quite dull. Things picked up again on the stretch to Kamanjab. Here we started to see crimson-breasted gonolek, southern white-crowned shrike, rattling cisticola and lots of lesser grey shrikes. The access roads (D2763/D2607) to Rustig Toko Lodge were very birdy and produced among

others pygmy falcon, chestnut-backed and grey-backed sparrowlark, bru bru and capped wheatear.



Landscape along the C35 near Ugab River

We arrived at the lodge around 1.30-2pm. During the heat of the day we relaxed a bit on the veranda. Bare-cheeked babbler, grey lourie and a juvenile Jacobin cuckoo (being nursed by the babblers) came to drink at the “bird bath” opposite our rooms.

In the afternoon I walked from the lodge to the campsite (about 3 km one way) and returned via the red trail, but first managed to take the wrong turn-off and ended up on the last part of the green trail, before turning back and taking the correct route. Birding was good everywhere and I quickly picked up purple roller, a male short-toed rock thrush, Cape penduline tit, long-billed crombec, Monteiro’s hornbill, cinnamon-breasted bunting, golden-breasted bunting, lark-like bunting, lots of chestnut weavers, red-billed quelea, brown-crowned tchagra, green-winged pytilia and violet-eared waxbill. On the red trail I added two Damara dik dik, a male baboon, two white-tailed shrike pairs and a family group of Carp’s tits. I also saw a shy rock hyrax that seemed to be the Kaokoveld subspecies.

Although our hostess and the guide initially seemed a bit skeptical about us wanting to do two night drives at this time of year, I definitely wanted to give it a go and I am glad I did because both night drives were well worth doing. So after an excellent dinner we climbed on the safari vehicle and started our drive. Quite quickly we picked up a steenbok. Maybe 30-40 minutes into the drive the spotter said “aardvark”. “What?? Really!!” First I could only see its back and the animal started walking away from us and then disappeared behind some bushes. For a

moment it seemed we lost it, when I suddenly saw its head with the big ears staring at us from behind a bush. It was looking and sniffing, but then turned around and walked off behind some trees and low bushes. Again it seemed we lost it but about a minute later we found it walking along one of the cattle fences. Here I had short but good and unrestricted views of the complete animal. It looked like it would go under the fence, which would have been great because there was mainly low grass with hardly any bushes on the other side of the fence. But the aardvark changed his mind and disappeared behind some bushes. Now for good. The next afternoon we went back to this spot to look at some giraffes and I noticed there was a large burrow there, so that's probably where the aardvark went. All in all, a classic aardvark sighting, too little and too short, but still great. Next we picked up several rufous-cheeked nightjars. We had excellent views of two in the spotlight only a few meters away. A spotted eagle owl posted on a fence allowed a very close approach and superb views. We followed the edge of some woodland for a while, but not much happened for some time. We then drove to a different area with open grassland but the grass was mostly quite high here. First we saw about twenty springbok, but despite the high grass we also managed to find an aardwolf. It was several tens of meters away but allowed very good views for a long time. On the drive back it was quiet but all in all an excellent night-drive.

Day 6, April 12: Rustig Toko Lodge

Our hostess had told us that along one of the trails there is a waterhole where mainly birds and sometimes mammals come to drink. I was eager to go there. As I had already walked the red trail and not seen a waterhole there, we tried the green trail. From the lodge you first walk along the entrance road, where we had two crested francolins, and about halfway (300 meters or so from the lodge), there is a sign to left. The signposting is a bit confusing as you should not follow the markers for the walking trail (which is one end of the green trail) along the fence, but you should actually open the cattle gate on the left (directly at the turn-off) and follow the signs to the campsite. You now walk on an unpaved track that splits again after a few hundred meters. The left fork leads to the campsite and the right fork is the first part of both the red and green trail that go parallel along the base of low dolomite rocks/hills. At some point the green track branches off (to the right) and goes uphill to a low saddle between two dolomite rock formations. Near the top of the saddle, there was a white-color-coded side track to the left towards one of the dolomite rock formations. We took this side trail (maybe 500-600 meters one way), which ends at the base of dolomite rocks. When we arrived at the base of the rocks, we saw three klipspringers dash off at amazing speed over the rocks. This had alarmed a couple of Hartlaub's spurfowl; they rushed up the rocks and then stopped to look at us. We had long unobstructed views of both the male and female. Birding here was very good with a pair of short-toed rock-thrushes, golden-breasted bunting, Monteiro's hornbill and pririt batis (and lots of other common species). Above the rocks in the air a black-breasted snake eagle and two rock kestrels were seen. We returned to the main track (green trail). After a kilometer or so, the main track continues straight on but there is a sign to the right in white paint, which probably is the continuation of the green trail. However, this trail seemed to be

badly overgrown after a while, so we continued straight on the wide main trail (basically an old farm track). Although easy to follow it became clear that this could not be the green trail and in the end we ended up at a farm (still part of the Rustig Toko estate). There we managed to reconnect with the green trail because this was the area where I had ended up yesterday, so we headed up the green trail from the other end but quickly walked into a fence and after the fence the trail seemed to stop or have gone lost or was just badly overgrown. We never managed to find the waterhole and a part of the green trail seems either overgrown or signposts have gone missing (the baboons like to mess up the signposts, we were told), but it was still a good walk.

After lunch we checked out the far end of the red trail and the campsite area, but apart from a group of warthogs nothing new was seen. Around the lodge I saw the bare-cheeked babblers and “their” juvenile Jacobin cuckoo again.



Confused Bare-cheeked Babbler

At 4 pm we went on a sunset drive. Things started off nicely with a striped mouse and a large, fairly loose mixed bird flock that included black-throated canary, red-billed quelea, Cape penduline tit, black-faced waxbill, great sparrow, black-chested prinia, and rattling cisticola. A bit further on we saw a group of kori bustards and a male northern black korhaan. On the track grey-backed sparrowlarks flew in front of the vehicle. In an area where the grass was much lower we saw African pipit, eastern clapper lark, monotonous lark, and sabota lark plus several unidentified larks and pipits (many looked like juveniles). Here we also had largish flocks of wattled starling and red-headed finch (about forty each). Mammals were seen as well: five giraffes, two steenbok, two ground squirrels, about sixty springbok, four mountain zebra (and one hybrid mountain/plains zebra) and two warthogs. We returned just after dark and saw a python cross the road near the entrance gate to the lodge.

After another tasty dinner our guide Hermann, his spotter and the two of us went out for our second night drive. We did a slightly different and longer route this time. In the beginning it was very quiet with only spotted thick-knee seen, but after about 30-40 minutes things were picking up: first we saw spotted eagle owl and rufous-cheeked nightjar, and finally also a white-faced scops owl (a species that had eluded me on various Africa trips). Next we had superb view of a bronze-winged courser. In the area where we had seen the aardwolf yesterday, we now picked up springbok, steenbok and more aardwolves (one alone and two together). In a different area with very low grass we found two distant springhares and two more bronze-winged coursers. Unfortunately no cats or genets, but another enjoyable night drive. For tomorrow we decided to sleep in, have a relaxed breakfast and then drive straight to Okakuejo.



Aardwolf

Day 7, April 13: Etosha - Okakuejo

Around 6.30am I couldn't sleep anymore, so I birded a bit in the lodge garden. Of note were a couple of paradise flycatchers and lesser masked weaver. After breakfast we said goodbye to our hosts and did a slow drive back to the C35, which produced two giraffes, red-crested korhaan, both sparrowlarks, spike-heeled lark, shaft-tailed whydah, an unidentified snake, and a fly-by sparrowhawk (probably a shikra).

After buying fresh fruit, snacks and some drinks in Kamanjab we drove straight to Etosha, only stopping for interesting birds a few times. In Kamanjab the cash machine inside the largest supermarket would not give us more than NAD 200 at a time, which is not very practical. If you need cash, stock up elsewhere. The C40

was a good birding road with Eurasian bee-eater, brown snake eagle, the only yellow-billed kite of the trip, a male red-backed shrike, an Abdim's stork and many southern white-crowned shrikes. The C38 north to Etosha was less exciting, but we did see a pygmy falcon on that stretch.

After entering the park we stopped at the Ombika waterhole, where about sixty white-backed vultures were (sun)bathing. A few warthogs stopped for a drink and zebra and springbok were grazing around the waterhole. Two bateleurs were patrolling the skies. A little north of Ombika we saw a group of ten red hartebeest, which turned out to be the largest group we would see in Etosha. Around 1 pm we checked in. I took a break and short nap, while Henk checked out the camp.



White-backed Vulture

In the afternoon we made the short loop along the waterholes Pan (nothing), Nebrowni, Gemsbokvlakte and back to Nebrowni around dusk. Things were rather quiet. At Nebrowni there were a few gemsbok and springbok and at Gemsbokvlakte we only saw a couple of black-backed jackals. Best birds were a couple of greater kestrels. When we returned to the camp, we had a quick look at the waterhole. Two elephants were drinking and there was rumour of a lioness hiding in the grass.

This evening it was very busy in Okakuejo Camp (possibly the camp was close to fully booked). The dinner was a rather hysterical affair with just too many people having to eat all at the same time. We decided that we would skip this circus the

next two nights and eat lunch at the restaurant and forget about the dinner buffet.

When we returned to the waterhole after dinner, there were more than 100 people at the waterhole. The elephants were still around and the lioness had raised her head a few times but was now invisible. Henk wasn't feeling well, so he went to bed relatively early. I stayed a bit longer and for a while nothing happened. Around 8.30pm the rhinos started coming. Then things went quickly. One rhino after another walked in and at some point I could see seven around the waterhole and more lurking in the back. There was some animosity between two rhinos and some posturing towards the rhinos from the elephants, which was fun to watch. One of the adult rhinos had a younger animal with her and caught wind of the lioness and chased her out of her hiding. When most of the rhinos and both elephants had disappeared, a giraffe tried to walk to the waterhole but then the lioness came down to drink, which stopped the giraffe in her tracks. Out of nowhere a young male lion turned up. In a single view I could now see a rhino cooling off in the middle of the pool, the two lions drinking at the edge and a restless and thirsty giraffe some 25 meters behind the lions. I was really tired by then and decided this was a good moment to call it a day.

Day 8, April 14: Etosha - Okakuejo

We got up at 5.15 am to be at breakfast at 5.30 am. Things weren't quite ready at 5.30 am, but at least there was coffee, cupcakes and yoghurt and fruit. If you want your full breakfast before you drive off, you will have to wait until 6-6.15. We left around 6 and did the following loop: Okakuejo-Okondeka-Adamax-Leeubron-Sprokieswoud-Leeubron-Okakuejo. Birding on the road to Okondeka was very good. Double-banded courser, ant-eating chat and capped wheatear were very common. A pleasant surprise was a group of at least four pink-billed larks. If you are early enough, you might find Namaqua sandgrouse on the road. Several large groups of grey-backed sparrowlarks were feeding at the road's edge.

At Okondeka a lot of animals had gathered including the resident pride of lions. The scenery is a bit apocalyptic with the sandy terrain, sparse vegetation, carcasses and bones strewn around the waterholes and the vast Etosha pan in the background. When we arrived, one of the lionesses was halfheartedly chasing a wildebeest. Zebra, springbok, and blue wildebeest were standing in a semicircle around the lions, some only 10-15 meters away from the cats. Namaqua sandgrouse were finding their way past sleeping lions to the water pools.

The stretch from Okondeka via Adamax to Leeubron leads through a pleasant, mostly open landscape, but unfortunately we didn't find the hoped for cheetahs (or any other large predators). Black-backed jackals were very common as well as plains zebra, springbok, and blue wildebeest. From Leeubron to Spokieswoud there is more woodland but still a lot of open grassland as well. Here we saw about twenty gemsbok and several giraffes. Birding was good all the way and we picked up among others lanner falcon, tawny eagle, several bateleurs and greater

kestrels, secretary bird, northern black korhaan, kori bustard, red-headed finch, sociable weaver, scaly-feathered finch, red-capped lark, a large group of ostriches and desert cisticola. At Sprokieswoud we saw Burchell's starling, chestnut-backed sparrowlark, dusky lark and a juvenile black-breasted snake-eagle. Around 10.30-11 it was getting too hot and things slowed down noticeably.

Lunch wasn't very exciting, but at least it was pleasantly quiet at the restaurant and we agreed that the marginally better option of having more choice wasn't worth it.

Mid-afternoon I had a quick look at the waterhole: a largish group of zebras was drinking, Abdim's storks were feeding along the grassy edge and a lappet-faced vulture and gymnogene sailed over the waterhole.

Henk decided to skip the afternoon drive. I drove back in the direction of Okondeka to try for better pictures of some of the birds, but activity wasn't as good as in the morning. The lions were still hanging around at Okondeka but not doing much. On the way back I had a quick look at Nebrowni. Apart from a black-backed jackal and some cape turtle and laughing doves the area seemed deserted. Just when I was about to leave, I noticed that behind me the driver of an overlander truck was taking a picture of something. A red-necked falcon!

Late afternoon Henk and I walked to the waterhole and installed ourselves. When we arrived there were no more than 6-7 people and even after dinner not that many people came. A long time not much was happening. A Verreaux eagle owl kept us entertained for a while. Two elephants came to drink. Then there was a power failure in the camp. Complete darkness. I told Henk we should have a look at the vegetation on the far side of the waterhole, because it's a good place to see little spotted genet. When we got there and I turned on the flashlight I had a genet in the light beam instantly. He moved off behind the last chalet so we tried to catch up with him by walking around the chalets from the other side, where indeed we found the genet again up in a tree. He still wouldn't allow a close enough approach for a decent photo, but still nice. We checked out the far side of the campsite for owls or small mammals, but found nothing. After quite a while (maybe 30 min), the generator problem had been fixed and the lights were working again. Around 8.15-8.30 the first rhino showed up. In the twilight of the waterhole's spotlights I could also see a spotted hyena chewing on something about 50 meters away from the water's edge. Not much else was happening and only two rhinos showed up until the generator broke down again and we went back to our chalet.

Day 9, April 15: Etosha - Okakuejo

In the morning the generator had another breakdown and despite the fact that most of the food was already on display, they wouldn't let the early risers have breakfast in the restaurant. Bizarre. So we went back, packed the car and took some snacks. When we got into the car, the lights in the camp went on again. At the restaurant we saw people having breakfast, so obviously now – that is, barely

10 minutes later – it was allowed to eat, so we had a quick breakfast of coffee, toast and fruit, then loaded the car with cupcakes and drove off.



Red-necked Falcon

Our plan was to drive Oliphantsbad and Aus via Gemsbokvlakte. The drive to Gemsbokvlakte and the waterhole itself was uneventful. The road to Oliphantsbad leads through dense mopane woodland. I first saw fresh elephant dung, then small twigs on the road, next small branches and finally really large branches. Inevitably we ran into a group of elephants, they were still taking apart roadside trees and one had liquid dripping from his glands behind his eyes. These guys seemed a little too excited to drive past and the road is too narrow to make a quick turn. So after watching them from a distance (and picking up a pair of perched red-necked falcons) we decided to turn around and head to Ombika/Gaseb. This road was more interesting birdwise with red-capped lark, spike-heeled lark, grey-backed sparrowlark, African pipit, greater striped swallow, desert cisticola and greater kestrel. The turn-off to Ombika turned out to be closed so onwards to Gaseb. On a stretch of open grassland we stopped for a group of zebras that were acting rather odd and nervous. It was a group of seven: two adult females, two adolescents, and three youngsters from this breeding season. First I thought they were troubled by our car, but then I noticed on the left side of the road a few beige brown “shapes” in the grass, lions. The zebras had already seen them, but the lions all still kept their heads and body low. The lead female zebra kept staring and snorting at the lions, the closest lion being only 10 meters away. The lead female held her ground while the others made a detour away from the lions with the other adult female leading the way. For at least ten minutes there was a very interesting stand off between the lions and the zebras. The lead female zebra slowly walked to the other side of the

road, but still kept the distance between her and the lions surprisingly small. Suddenly a vehicle from a lodge south of Andersson gate barged in, blocked our views on the zebras and the whole momentum was gone. Thanks very much. The lions now all raised their heads and there were seven of them (initially only four were visible). It was interesting to see how they were spread out in a triangle over about 20-30 meters with almost geometrical precision. The zebras moved away from the lions a bit further but they stopped about fifty meters away from them and kept looking at them. After some 7-8 minutes the other vehicle left because it seemed that the lions were leaving when they got up. However, the lions were just regrouping and started to groom each other. For some of them the adrenaline was still running high and they started play-fighting. This led to some spectacular mock fights and lions chasing each other and jumping up against each other in mid-air.



Back in the camp we sat down at the waterhole for a while: not much was happening but groups of red-headed finches and shaft-tailed whydahs stopped for a drink. Near our chalet I saw a couple of yellow-billed hornbills and sociable weavers were common in the campsite area.

In the afternoon Henk wanted to go back to Okondeka to see if the lions there would show some action. On the way up there we saw nothing new. At Okondeka waterhole there were now eight lions including a male, but they were all dozing or fast asleep. We waited for about thirty minutes but not much happened. The drive back was uneventful as well.

Around dusk we installed ourselves again at the waterhole. This time there were two Verreaux eagle owls hunting near the waterhole. Around 8.30 pm the rhinos started to show up, we saw at least six. There were a few more relatively short power cuts. Not much happened, so around 9.30 we went back to our chalet.

Day 10, April 16: Etosha - Halali

We drove to Halali via the main road stopping at most waterholes en route. Several kilometers east of Nebrowni we saw a pair of red-necked falcons and our last double-banded sandgrouses. Homob was one of the more interesting waterholes with some waterbirds, zebra, springbok, and gemsbok present. At Rietfontein I saw my first black-faced impalas. Notable birds en route were the first Kalahari scrub robins, groundscraper thrush (at the turn-off for Halali) and red-breasted swallow.



Double-banded Courser



White-crested Helmetshrike

At Halali we headed straight for lunch, which was excellent. Next to the restaurant there were several Smith's bush squirrels frolicking around. After lunch we made a quick walk to the waterhole and around the campsite. The waterhole was quiet, but at the campsite we saw banded mongoose, southern red and Damara hornbill and gabar goshawk.

During the heat of the day I took a break and Henk checked out the waterhole once more and walked around the camp. When he came back he said seen a black bird with a long tail and white markings on the wing. I thought he was just saying that to irk me because I had shown him the drawing of violet wood hoopoe in the field guide this morning. I asked him where he had seen the bird and whether he was sure it wasn't a scimitarbill, but I decided to check this out later.

In the afternoon we drove via Helios (nothing) and Goas (only a few birds) to Noniams, where we had some great views of male giraffes fighting. We then spent quite some time at Goas, but there was absolutely nothing happening there. On the way back along the road we saw seven black-faced impalas and one female kudu. We were back at the camp around dusk and I made a quick walk to the area where Henk had seen the "black bird with a long tail". When I got there, I almost immediately found a violet wood hoopoe drinking from one of the leaking taps. When I tried to approach it for a closer look, I saw another one

much closer. As it was already getting dark, I unfortunately had to use the flash to get some record shots.

When we were getting ready to walk to the waterhole after dark, I noticed a barn owl sitting on the roof of our room. On the way to the waterhole I heard an African scops owl calling, but it was too far away. It was quite busy with people at the waterhole when we arrived. After a while a black rhino came to drink; here the animals are much closer than at Okakuejo, so when something shows up the views are great. After a while I decided to cross the bridge left of the main seating area and sit down at the semicircle stone bench at the far end (nobody else was sitting there) to have a slightly different perspective. After sitting there for about fifteen minutes I suddenly heard a noisy rumbling in the rocky area left of where I was sitting. I walked towards the edge of the seating area and waited for the sound to come closer. When I clicked on the spotlight, I was eye to eye with a porcupine only 3 meters away, it was probably as surprised as I was and the animal quickly scurried up the rocks behind the seating area. I waved Henk to come and told him about the porcupine. I knew chances were slim but I was hoping it might come back the same way. We sat down for a while and after about 10-15 minutes we heard the same sound again, but again left of the seating area so it wasn't the first animal returning from the other side. Left of the seating area there are several large rocks and then several larger trees under which little undergrowth grows, so there is basically a flat "arena" under the trees enclosed by rocks and bushes. This time I positioned myself at the edge where the trees and rocks meet to be able to shine on the open area under the trees. I heard an animal come closer. When I put on the spotlight on the "arena", we were looking at a massive porcupine about six meters away (this one much bigger than the first animal). Its quills went up immediately and he stood there for about ten seconds but he then turned around and descended down the rocks. Superb views, much better than the first one. Unfortunately, it took off too quickly to take any pictures. I told Henk that we should keep quiet and wait. He should operate the spotlight so that I could take pictures. Amazingly we heard the porcupine move around again a little later. I had my camera ready, but the porcupine tried to outsmart us by avoiding the open area under the trees. At some point it was so close that I told Henk to put on the spotlight. I could see the porcupine only three meters away but mostly obscured by a dense bush. "There it is, there it is" I whispered. But Henk clearly wasn't seeing it from where he was standing and was still focusing on the open area. "It is right here in front of us". Just when Henk got onto the beast and moved the light to where the porcupine was, it dashed out of the bush and raced ahead passing us a mere 1.5 meters away from us. It all happened too quickly to take a picture. Shame about the photo, but it was good fun. At the waterhole nothing had been happening during the time we were chasing the porcupines. So we decided to walk off the excitement by spotlighting back via the camping area (only a scrub hare) and then went back to our room.

I wasn't sleeping that well that night and around 3am I got up for a pee. When I went back to bed, I was still half awake when I heard the garbage bin being bowled over. "Henk, Henk, honey badger" It took me a couple of minutes to find back the essentials (bins, spotlight, contact lenses and shoes) and then raced

outside. I shone the light around the bin and sure enough there was the honey badger. I had a good look at it and then raced back inside for my camera. When I came back, the honey badger was gone, but I knew there was another garbage bin 30 meters away from the other one, so I walked in that direction and indeed there was the honey badger again. When I tried to get closer to try for a picture, he got wary and when the distance was less than 20 meters, he raced off in the direction of the campsite. A quick spotlighting session around our rooms and the edge of the campsite area next to our room only yielded three scrub hares.



Smith's Bush Squirrel

Day 11, April 17: Etosha - Halali

In the morning we made the loop Halali camp-Etosha Lookout-Nuamses-Goas-Halali-Rietfontein-the 8km detour loop near Rietfontein-Halali camp. On the main road we saw an adult martial eagle, a blue crane, and a group of rattling cisticolas, and more common species such as Sabota lark, northern black korhaan, marico flycatcher, great sparrow, and familiar chat.

At Nuamses there were a few impalas but little else. South of Nuamses we saw another martial eagle. Goas was again very quiet. Only a few birds were present. While driving to Rietfontein via Halali camp we saw a dwarf mongoose, but little else of note. A pair of steenbok was seen on the 8-km loop road north of the main road near Rietfontein. The loop road was very birdy (Sabota lark, red-headed finch, lilac-breasted roller, fork-tailed drongo, desert cisticola, marico flycatcher, great sparrow, scaly-feathered finch, etc., etc.) but nothing new was seen.

Back in Halali Camp we walked to the waterhole. On the track to the waterhole I had superb views of two white-crested helmetsrikes. At the waterhole gabar goshawk and a marabou was seen, but no mammals.

In the afternoon we drove the following route Halali-Rietfontein-Salvadora-Sueda-Loop road west of Rietfontein-Rietfontein-Halali. At Rietfontein a few springbok, zebra and one black-faced impala were seen. Here we also saw the

only greater jacana of the trip. The loop road was a pleasant drive with mostly common birds and mammals. Around dusk we saw a marsh owl fly over the grasslands between Rietfontein and the turn-off for Halali.

After lunch we had signed up for the night drive. When we walked to the reception around 6.45 pm, we were told that there would be 12 people, us, a young German guy, and a French tour group. We were supposed to leave at 7, but were told that the French would be a bit later. Around 7.15pm the tour bus with the French arrived (they were late because of a flat tire) and first wanted to have dinner. Around 7.30 the French still even hadn't showed up for dinner so the night-drive guide went over to the guide of the French to check what was going on. It turned out they had all been waiting in their room waiting to be told when to have dinner! The French group was given the choice: join the drive or have dinner! Just one older man of the group joined us. So around 7.45 we were finally on our way. We drove to the Rietfontein area. On the road from Halali Camp back to the main road we had already seen three spotted eagle owls, which I thought was pretty good. It was nothing compared to the main road, where we saw at least 10-15 more. We also saw 3-4 rufous-cheeked nightjars and best of all a marsh owl sitting on the road, which must have been the same one that we saw around dusk as it was seen in exactly the same area. After several black-backed jackals on the road it was brilliant to see a Cape Fox for a change. He was hunting after a large insect across the road and finally got it and buried it in one of the piles of gravel (for road works). The fox stayed close to the car for several minutes. Excellent! A couple of kilometers on we had another Cape Fox, but he was rather shy and walked into high grass rather quickly. Only minutes later we had a couple of bat-eared foxes on the road. From behind the car another one showed up and they kept running in front of our vehicle for several hundred meters. Several times we could hear the contact call of another animal behind the car and despite driving slowly and stopping several times he seemed too scared to pass the car. Eventually we stopped and waited for a longer time and he finally walked to the front of the vehicle. Once united they soon walked off into the grassland. Closer to Rietfontein we had a black rhino cross the road. At Rietfontein it was fairly quiet. We stopped there for a while, but no interesting nocturnal mammals showed up. West of Rietfontein we drove the longer loop south of the main road. In this area but still on the main road we saw a spotted hyena walking past a group of springbok. On the loop road we first saw a porcupine, which ran in front of the vehicle at considerable speed for at least a kilometer before hiding under an acacia bush. A bit further we had a small cat (or genet) on the road, but it disappeared when we came closer. It looked like an African wild cat to me. Only minutes later we had another porcupine, this time walking towards us and putting up his quills in full display when we came closer with the car. Excellent views at close range! On the way back things slowed down again, but we had rather poor views of an African wild cat walking through high grass. I only saw it well when it pounced out of the tall grass.

All in all an excellent and action-packed night drive, but I also got the feeling that this was a better than average night drive. Jon Hall already pointed this out in his report: the spotlighting with the red filter isn't great (and makes photos look weird). The guide showed us the range of the spotlight with and without filter

and the range loss was about 50%, which possibly makes seeing shy animals or animals with poor eyesight even more difficult.



Porcupine

When we were waiting for the French I chatted a bit with the guide about the wildlife sightings. He had seen a caracal three days ago, but said it was a rare sighting. He had been working at Halali for a couple of years and had never seen a brown hyena during his time there. Leopard is seen fairly regularly on night drives (at least once a week).

Day 12, April 18: Etosha - Namutoni

This morning we slept in. After a quick check at the waterhole (nothing special) we noticed that a German/Brazilian couple had found a roosting African scops owl in front of our room. Great views of the bird only a few meters away.

After breakfast we drove the following route: Halali-Goas-Hartebeestdraai-Springbokfontein-Okerfontein-Kalkheuwel-Chudob-Koinachas-Namutoni. At the Hartebeestdraai we had a female Swainson's spurfowl with chicks and a group of white-crested helmetshrikes. Around Okerfontein there were giraffes, lots of zebras and quite a lot of antelopes including 40+ gemsbok, several red hartebeest groups/singles, blue wildebeest, and many springbok. Near Okerfontein we also saw a slender mongoose. The birding highlight was a male long-tailed paradise whydah in full regalia at Kalkheuwel (no mammals at all there).

In the afternoon we drove to Two Palms (and slightly beyond) and then returned, followed by a visit to the Okevi waterholes. The road to Two Palms had good numbers of springbok, giraffe, zebra, and blue wildebeest and a handful of

gemsbok. Again no cats or hyenas. Birding was good though with blue crane, kori bustard and secretary bird on the grassy plains. Between Two Palms and Aroe where the road crosses the pan there was excellent wetland birding with glossy ibis, wood sandpiper, marabou, grey heron, pied avocet, black-winged stilt, wattled lapwing, countless red-billed teal, some Cape teal and one Hottentot teal. At one stretch where we weren't quite sure whether our dinky toy 4x4 (Toyota Rav 4) would get stuck, we turned around and drove back the same way and drove to the Okevi waterholes, which were both completely deserted. The loop that surrounds the Okevi waterholes only produced a yellow canary. Between Namutoni Camp and Okevi the road crosses the pan. Here there was a quite spectacular gathering of giraffes, we counted at least 60 animals out on the plain that afternoon, but probably more were around. Birding was good as well with African spoonbill, African shelduck, glossy ibis, red-billed teal in their hundreds, and a small group of grey-headed gulls. In the evening we had dinner at the restaurant in the fort, but I saw nothing while spotlighting on our way to the fort.

Day 13, April 19: Etosha - Namutoni

In the morning we first drove the Dik Dik loop and then visited Chudob and Kalkheuwel. The Dik Dik loop is fun to do. Here we saw slender mongoose, bru bru and brown-crowned tchagra, but no black-faced babbler. Spotted hyena was heard only. On the way back we stopped at Klein Namutoni, which produced a tawny eagle. Chudob (together with Okondeka) was probably the best waterhole in Etosha during our visit but Klein Namutoni was pretty good too. At Chudob there were always some mammals and birds present. This morning there were giraffes, zebra, black-faced impala and springbok. Several people saw a large male leopard in the Chudob area.

After our visit to Chudob Henk wanted to do some chores and relaxing so I dropped him off at the camp and I continued to Aroe. This was good fun with Burchell's sandgrouse, the only great white egret of the tour, great white pelican, African spoonbill, and three-banded plover, and all the common antelopes plus warthog, black-backed jackal and warthog. Unfortunately no chestnut-banded plover at Aroe. On the way back I first checked Tsumcor (nothing), but found an excited elephant on the road doing a rather half-hearted mock charge at two cars before running off into the bush. I then drove the Dik Dik drive one more time: another slender mongoose and two red-billed buffalo weavers were seen. On the way out I saw a family of banded mongooses near Klein Namutoni.

In the afternoon we tried the road to Twee Palms once more and then spent longer periods at Klein Namutoni and Chudob. Although pleasant, we pretty much saw the same species that we saw in the morning.

We had signed up for another night drive. This time it was just us and an Israeli couple (the night before there were ten people). Just outside the gate we saw a small spotted genet. We first drove to Klein Namutoni, where we saw three black rhinos including a female with a very small baby, but they ran away immediately. At Koianachas we had very good views of a "mystery" mongoose, which I think must have been a yellow mongoose on a nightly outing. On our way to Chudob,

we picked up a male lion (sleeping on the road) and a total of four spotted hyenas. At Chudob we saw another black rhino and two black-backed jackals. We waited for quite some time, but not much happened. On our way back we found a different male lion on the road. We stayed for at least twenty minutes with this male and then went back to the camp. I was a bit surprised that we didn't see any owls at all.

Day 14, April 20: Etosha (Namutoni) – Waterberg national park

In the morning we first drove to Chudob. The usual antelopes and zebra were present, but not much else. We decided to have a look at the area a few kilometers north of Namutoni where the road to Andoni crosses the pan. Here we saw two spotted hyenas. We drove back in the direction of Chudob in the hope to catch up with the hyenas, but ran into a pack of lions (mainly adolescents, plus an adult female and a young male) next to the road and lost track of the hyenas. We took some photos and watched them for about 15 minutes. It was getting crowded and I did not want to be completely cornered by other cars, so we drove off and tried the Dik Dik drive one more time, which proved to be very reliable for slender mongoose. Some nice birds were seen as well, including white-browed scrub robin, common scimitarbill, four hornbill species, Swainson's spurfowl, and green-winged pytilia. A dik dik was seen near Klein Namutoni. Back in the camp we saw four red-billed buffalo weavers and blue waxbill.



Banded Mongoose reunion: the small one slightly left of the center of the image was one of the "victims"

When we were about to leave Namutoni I again heard intense alarm cries from banded mongooses in the area left of the museum. I had heard it yesterday evening as well, but I thought they had seen a snake or some other predator. Since the alarm calls were constantly coming from the same place, I walked over there and noticed there was a manmade hole, i.e., a 1 square meter quadrant with two water pipes running across and about 2.20 meters deep with smooth concrete walls on all four sides. Two young banded mongooses had fallen down into the hole and there was no way they would get out of there. At least 15 mongooses had stayed in the area and peeked down every now and then, but

there was nothing they could do. To have nature its way in this artificial trap seemed a little too cruel, so I looked for a long stick, which I put down the hole diagonally. I then waited for a minute and looked into the hole. The mongooses had indeed started to climb, but they were clearly scared and exhausted. So very slowly I lifted up the stick with the mongooses trying to cling on to it. One jumped off as soon he saw level ground, which almost knocked the other one off the stick back into the deep, but luckily both got off safely. Next, there was a big reunion party among the mongooses, which was fun to watch.

On the road between Etosha and Otjiwarongo we saw a brown snake eagle and two slender mongooses. Between Otjiwarongo and the turn-off for the C22 little of note was seen. The C22 has good birding (we had our only southern pied babblers there), but it is safer (speeding vehicles) to bird on the unpaved D2512, and which was even better. Here we saw among others Monteiro's hornbill, Rüppel's Parrot, blue waxbill, crimson-breasted gonolek, white-browed and Kalahari scrub-robin, and another slender mongoose.

When we arrived in Waterberg the staff at the reception claimed that we were not expected until tomorrow, but after I showed them my reservation, we were given a room. I first took a shower and a nap and late afternoon I explored the accommodation area and the Francolin trail. Damara dik dik was tame and common around the accommodation. Close to our room I found both shikra and gabar goshawk. Purple roller, pale-winged starling and Burchell's starling were very common. Of note were a family of pririt batises, black-backed puffback, acacia pied barbet and best of all three Rüppel's parrots. Banded mongooses are common around the restaurant and the campsite. I was too tired to do much after dinner, so pretty much went straight to bed.

Day 15, April 21: Waterberg national park

In the morning we tried most of the walking trails. Most birders will first check out the Kambazembi Trail, but since I had already seen most of the specials (rockrunner, Hartlaub's spurfowl, etc.), we tried the other trails instead. We first had breakfast and then climbed up to the viewpoint along the Mountain View Trail. Nice views but not overwhelming. On the way up I saw three Rüppel's parrots, a lot of tame rock hyraxes, and pale-winged starling. From the viewpoint a lot of Bradfield's swifts were seen, but strangely no raptors apart from a single rock kestrel. From the top we walked down via the Fig Tree and Aloe trails down to the campsite. Birding was quite good, but strangely the birds seemed rather shy in comparison to other places. Species seen included rosy-faced lovebird, pririt batis, several hornbill species, more Rüppel's parrots, black-throated canary, black-faced waxbill, dusky sunbird, and yellow canary. At the campsite Henk turned back to do some reading and relaxing. From the campsite I walked to the entrance gate and then continued a bit along the D2512. Here I had Damara hornbill (on the D2512), several waxbill species, barred wren-warbler, chestnut-vented tit-babbler, pririt batis, black-backed puffback and red-billed buffalo-weaver. I walked back up via the cemetery, mission trail, restaurant and then the Forest Walk trail, but by then it was getting too warm, so I saw little on the way up.

Since I had seen most of my target bird species, we decided to give the afternoon game drive a try. I was a little surprised when I saw that twelve people were on the tour. The game drive lasts four hours, but it still was a very rushed affair. You first drive for 20-25 minutes along the D2512 and then enter the park via a different gate. Birding along the D2512 was good and the guide stopped for a Monteiro's hornbill, but quickly realized that only one out of twelve people was interested in birds. Later we raced past a hornbill that I am pretty sure was a Bradfield's hornbill. At the gate there was a convoy of cars with Namibian officials and a team of the German GIZ (a company that lobbies for the German government's development interests worldwide). Our guide waited to see which route they would take and then headed off in the opposite direction. The distances on the plateau are quite large, so the vehicle basically races with 50-60 km/h over the plateau from one waterhole to the other. At the first waterhole we saw literally one bird, a golden-breasted bunting, but nothing else. We then passed a natural waterhole and this area produced a group of ten red hartebeests and twelve sable antelopes, a brown snake eagle, red-crested korhaan and a bit later a large sable male alone. Further on we saw a lone male buffalo. In a beautiful area skirting along a rocky area there was good birding (but no time to stop for that), but we also saw a roan that was being harassed by horseflies. Only ten minutes later we had another roan that stayed around longer. We finally stopped at another waterhole, which had a large group of buffalo (more than fifty) and two giraffes. As always it was time to get out of the park at the time of day when interesting things start to happen. On the D2512 we saw a spotted eagle owl and a rufous-cheeked nightjar, but no mammals.

After dinner we did a nightwalk. First we checked out the trees around the reception where we flushed a pearl-spotted owlet. At the campsite we only found a scrub hare. From the campsite we walked up the main road and checked out both forks of the road where the accommodation is. I was in particular looking for lesser bushbabies but couldn't find any. We only saw three Damara dik diks. We then walked both forks of the Fig Tree trail, which are quite flat and easy to walk on. In daytime I had seen there was some standing water and fallen figs on the trail, so I was hoping that this would attract animals, but we didn't find anything. In a rockier stretch I saw a small mammal slink away in dense undergrowth, probably a genet. All in all, a bit disappointing. We walked down to the bar for a drink and Henk wanted to watch the second half of Barcelona – Real Madrid.

Day 16, April 22: Waterberg – Windhoek – Flight to Europe

My attempts to sleep in were hopeless again. Around 6.30 I was wide awake and I drove down to the reception. There was a lot of bird activity around the reception, a juvenile little sparrowhawk was mobbed by the resident Burchell's starlings. In a single small tree I found cardinal woodpecker, crimson-breasted gonolek, green-winged pytilia, long-billed crombec and black-backed puffback. Other goodies were common scimitarbill, slender mongoose, Damara dik dik, and what was probably a striped mouse.

After a late breakfast we left Waterberg and slowly drove the D2512 and C22. Best sightings were slender mongoose, martial eagle and black-breasted snake eagle. Back on the B1 the only sightings of note were a spoonbill and several baboon groups crossing the road. We arrived at Windhoek around 2 pm and had a quick look around the city centre, but there is not much to see. Around 3.45 pm we drove back to the car rental company to make it on time for the 4pm shuttle to the airport. The airport is quite small and it is not a great place to do some last-minute shopping. The flight was thankfully turbulence-free, because I am not sure what would have happened with the girl sitting next to me on the other side of the aisle. Just before takeoff I looked to the right and noticed a young French guy with a desperate look in his eyes holding his girlfriend who had assumed something of a fetal position. He clearly knew what was coming and once the plane started to take off, the girl just completely lost it. I have never seen anyone with such a fear of flying. Once we were at high altitude, things calmed down again, but about an hour into the flight the girl had to get up for a toilet visit. Somehow she got a bit entangled in her headset wires and then fell backwards in my direction. Her boyfriend and I stopped her from falling, no big deal. But she had another panic attack and went off on this unbelievable tantrum with some very strong French swearing that shall not be repeated here. Suddenly headsets, blankets and cushions flying around the aircraft, so her boyfriend had to escort her to the bathroom, where she stayed for at least an hour. Dinner was interesting: I had ordered a Hindu vegetarian meal just because they tend to be nicer than the regular meals, which caused some excitement during the check-in ("Sir, that is a very unusual meal code. Are you sure this is correct?"). I am not a vegetarian but I thought it was a little amusing that I was served chicken tikka masala (the meal on the way in was proper Indian vegetarian food and very nice by the way).



Banded Mongoose near Klein Namutoni

Trip Lists: Literature and Index

I used trip reports and the *Sasol's Southern African Birdfinder* by C. Cohen, C. Spottiswoode and J. Rossouw to select the birding sites. For bird identification I only took *Sasol Birds of Southern Africa* by I. Sinclair, P. Hockey, W. Tarboton and P. Ryan. At home I also used *Birds of Africa (South of the Sahara)* by I. Sinclair and P. Ryan. Sounds recordings of the birds were compiled from the 6-CD set *Birds of Southern Africa* by Guy Gibbons and recordings on Xenocanto. I used my MP3 player only a few times, i.e., to try to call in Herero chat and black-faced babbler (no success with both) and check the calls of some owls and larks. Otherwise the birding was easy and playing the calls was not necessary. For mammals I took the *Field Guide to African Mammals* by J. Kingdon. For rodent identification I also checked several of the guides for the Southern African region (Smithers, Stuart, etc.) at home. For the mammal sites I mainly used the reports on www.mammalwatching.com. Trip reports and the Bradt guide were useful for general travel information.

The acronyms in the trip lists below refer to the following areas:

EWL = Erongo Wilderness Lodge, trails and immediate surroundings and the area around Paula's Cave

RTL = Rustig Toko Lodge, entrance road, the walking trails, the track to the campsite and the grassland areas near the lodge

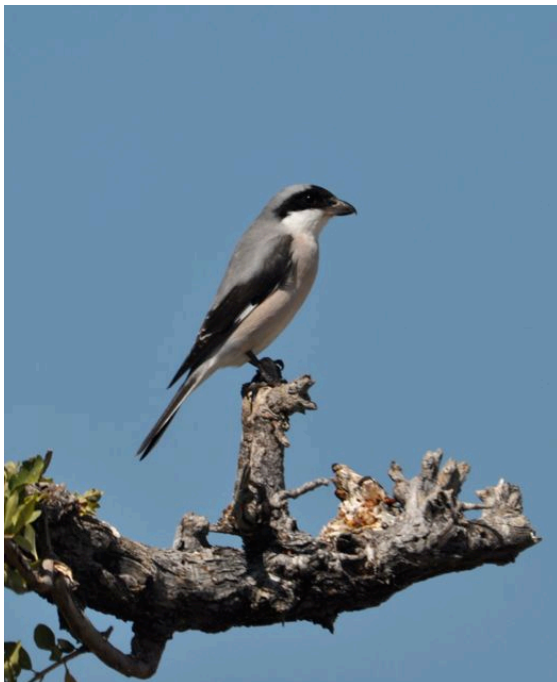
HAL = Halali camp and surroundings (i.e., the area enclosed by Goas, Nuamses, Rietfontein and Sueda waterholes)

OKA = Okakuejo camp and surroundings (i.e., the area enclosed by Okondeka, Adamax, Sprokieswoud, Ombika, Gaseb, Gemsbokvlakte, and Nebrowni)

NAM = Namutoni camp and surroundings (i.e., the area enclosed by Kalkheuwel, Chudob, Dik Dik Drive, Fisher's Pan and Tsumcor)

WAT = Waterberg camp, entrance road and trails

BRA = Brandberg White Lady Lodge, entrance road, the mountain centre and the D2359



Lesser Grey Shrike



Southern White-crowned Shrike

MAMMAL LIST

Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus* – a group of about 6-7 on one of the trails in EWL. Single animals en route from BRA to RTL, common and a nuisance at WAT, several groups en route from WAT to Windhoek

South African Ground Squirrel *Xerus inauris* – two animals were seen several times at the entrance of the lodge in RTL, quite common in Etosha (about 5-20 daily), one on the game drive in WAT

Congo Rope Squirrel (Striped Tree Squirrel) *Funisciurus congicus* - common around the lodge buildings in RTL

Smith's Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus cepapi* – common in HAL camp

Springhare *Pedetes capensis* – two on the second night drive in RTL

Porcupine *Hystrix africaeaustralis* – a surprise sighting of two at the far end of the seating area in HAL, two on the night drive in HAL

Dassie Rat *Petromus typicus* – 1-3 daily in EWL



Cape Fox and Western Rock Elephant Shrew

Western (Smith's) Rock Elephant Shrew *Elephantulus rupestris* – two along the main track south of the lodge. Both Bushveld Elephant Shrew *Elephantulus intufi* and Western (Smith's) Rock Elephant Shrew *Elephantulus rupestris* occur here. Given the rocky habitat in the immediate surroundings of the lodge *E. rupestris* would be the most obvious candidate, but the field guide by Smithers got me confused because the following characteristics are given for *E. Intufi*: white eye ring, conspicuous russet patches behind the ears, conspicuous white hairs on the edges of the ear. These characteristics can all be seen in the photo in my opinion, but may not be enough to be diagnostic to separate both species. Any input on the ID is welcome; please contact me at: olpa-at-onsneteindhoven.nl

Aardvark *Orycteropus afer* – one at RTL on the night drive on April 11

Rock Hyrax *Procavia capensis* – common around EWL and WAT

[Kaokoveld Rock Hyrax *Procavia capensis welwitschia* – common in the rocky/mountainous in the Brandberg area, the only hyrax seen in RTL also seemed to be this subspecies]

African Bush Elephant *Loxodonta africana* – 2-3 at the waterhole every night at OKA, a rowdy group of at least three between Gemsbokvlakte and Oliphantsbad on April 15, one on the road near Tsumcor in the NAM area on April 19

Pygmy Rock Mouse *Petromyscus collinus* – at least one in EWL around the restaurant area

Four-striped Grass Mouse *Rhabdomys pumilio* – one at RTL on April 12, only two sightings in Etosha, both in the OKA area

[Rodent species – twice in Etosha I saw a medium-sized rat/mouse of about 12-15 cm length, tail maybe about 125% of body length, and no stripes on its back. Fairly large naked ears (at least no visible hair). Color was plain brown with slightly coarse fur. It definitely wasn't a striped mouse or Brant's whistling rat]

Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis* – one seen by Henk only on the night drive in EWL on April 8, one at BRA on April 9, three seen in HAL camp on April 16, at least two on the night drive in NAM, one at night at the edge of the campsite in WAT

Aardwolf *Proteles cristatus* – one on the first night drive and three on the second night drive at RTL, a roadkill on the B2 near Karibib

Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas* – common in Etosha (2-20 daily), only seen as a roadkill outside Etosha

Cape Fox *Vulpes chama* – two single animals on the night drive in HAL, a very fresh roadkill on the C33 near Omaruru

Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis* – a family of four on the night drive at HAL

Honey Badger *Mellivora capensis* – one seen well raiding the bins in HAL camp at 3 am on April 17

Yellow Mongoose *Cynictis penicillata* – a family of four (including two young) on the road to Okondeka on April 14. A mystery mongoose seen well on the night drive in NAM at Koinachas must have been this species (they are sometimes active at night according to several reference works): animal looked uniformly pale colored and had a white tail tip.

Slender Mongoose *Galerella sanguinea* – 1-2 seen all three times we drove the Dik Dik drive, several other scattered sightings in the NAM area, several on the D2512, also seen around the reception at WAT and on the road between the reception and the entrance gate

Dwarf Mongoose *Helogale parvula* – one on April 17 in the HAL area

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* – six at the edge of the campsite area in HAL, a tame group of at least 35 animals in NAM camp, a group of about 20 on the road between the Klein Namutoni waterhole and the Dik Dik drive, a group of at least 20 in WAT at the campsite and around the restaurant.

[Brown Hyena *Parahyena brunnea* – not seen, fresh tracks (less than a day old) at EWL on the drive to Paula's cave]

Spotted Hyena *Crocuta crocuta* – four on the night drive in NAM and two the next morning in the area northwest of the camp where the road crosses the pan

Small Spotted Genet *Genetta genetta/felinae* – one on the night walk on April 8, one in OKA camp at the far end of the waterhole, one on the night drive in NAM

African Wildcat *Felis silvestris* – at least one but a possible second animal on the night drive in HAL

[Leopard *Panthera pardus* – not seen, tracks of a few days old on one of the trails at EWL, common around HAL and NAM and seen by many people, but not by us.]

Lion *Panthera leo* – six on April 14 and seven on April 15 at the Okondeka waterhole in Etosha, a group of seven on the road between Goas and Gaseb, two males on the night drive in NAM, and a group of at least eight on the main road about 4-5 km west of NAM camp on April 20



Lions near Gaseb (Etosha)

Burchell's Zebra *Equus burchellii* – common in Etosha

Hartmann's Mountain Zebra *Equus hartmannae* – four (and one hybrid Plains/Mountain Zebra) at RTL

Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* – up to seven together at the waterhole in OKA, seen on all evenings there, one at the HAL waterhole on April 17, and one on the nightdrive in HAL on April 17, three (including a small baby) at Klein Namutoni and one at Chudob on the night drive in NAM on April 19

Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* – five seen by Henk only at RTL on April 11, another group of five at RTL on April 12, three near Ombika and two south of OKA camp on April 13, often present at or around Klein Namutoni waterhole, three in NAM camp

Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis* – common in Etosha, including a sensational gathering of at least 60 animals at the western edge of Fisher's Pan



Giraffe (Rustig Toko Lodge)

Red Hartebeest *Alcelaphus buselaphus* – scarce in Etosha, ten near Ombika on April 13, one on April 17 near Nuamsees, a total of about fifteen on the transfer from HAL to NAM including a group of eight at Okerfontein, about ten on afternoon drive in WAT on April 21

Blue Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus* – common in Etosha (10-200 daily)

Springbok *Antidorcas marsupialis* – small groups and single animals in the BRA area, about 20-60 at RTL, common in Etosha (several hundreds daily)

Damara (Kirk's) Dik-dik *Madoqua kirkii* – three on the morning walk at EWL on April 8, two on the entrance road at EWL on April 9, two on the red trail in RTL, two between Klein Namutoni and the start of the Dik Dik drive, common on the lawns around the accommodation in WAT

Klipspringer *Oreotragus oreotragus* – three sightings of six animals in total on April 8 and one on April 9 at EWL, three in the rocky areas at RTL on April 12

Steenbok *Raphicerus campestris* – a female at the base of Brandberg mountain area on April 10, a male en route to RTL on April 11, two at RTL on the night drives on April 11 and 12. In Etosha: a male on April 14, a pair on April 16, two pairs on April 17 and a male on April 18

Black-faced Impala *Aepyceros melampus petersi* – scarce around OKA, fairly common around HAL and very common around NAM

African Buffalo *Syncerus caffer* – a single male and a large group (>50) at one of the waterholes in WAT

Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* – one female seen by Henk only at RTL, one male on one of the trails at EWL, a female at HAL

Nyala *Nyala angasii* – one male on a hunting farm near WAT

Roan Antelope *Hippotragus equinus* – two single animals on the plateau in WAT

Sable Antelope *Hippotragus niger* – a group of about 10 animals and a single male at the plateau in WAT

Gemsbok *Oryx gazella* – fairly common in Etosha (5-30 daily), but not seen April 17



Damara Dik Dik (Erongo Wilderness Lodge)

BIRD LIST

Ostrich *Struthio camelus* – a few en route and at RTL, very common in Etosha NP
Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* – seen at all locations visited, groups of up to 50-60 (adults and young) in Etosha

Crested Francolin *Francolinus sephaena* – two along the entrance road in RTL on April 12

Hartlaub's Francolin *Francolinus hartlaubi* – three opposite the reception at the generator house on April 8, a pair seen very well at RTL on April 12

Red-billed Francolin *Francolinus adspersus* – common, seen at all locations, but seemed to be scarcer in Etosha in the Okakuejo area

Swainson's Francolin *Francolinus swainsonii* – two en route from HAL to NAM on April 18, a female with offspring on April 19, a single bird around NAM on April 20

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* – less common than expected, typically seen around waterholes with permanent water in Etosha, more regular around Fisher's Pan

South African Shelduck *Tadorna cana* – a total of four sightings in Etosha (one pair at Okondeka, one pair at Nebrowni, and twice family groups of at least ten seen in the Fisher's Pan area).

Cape Teal *Anas capensis* - several tens around Fisher's Pan

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha* – thousands around Fisher's Pan, also seen at the waterholes Ombika, Klein Namutoni and Goas

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota* – one at the eastern side of Fisher's Pan between Aroe and Twee Palms

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* – usually a pair at waterholes with permanent water and good cover (Nuamses, Goas, Kalkheuwel, Chudob, etc.) in Etosha, larger numbers at Fisher's Pan

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii* – one along the C40 between Kamanjab and Outjo, 1-4 at Okakuejo Camp on all three days there, usually feeding at the waterhole

Marabou *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* – one landing in a tree near the waterhole at HAL, more common in the NAM area, in particular at the eastern side of Fisher's Pan (between Aroe and Twee Palms), and almost always several at the Klein Namutoni waterhole.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* – a group of at least ten at the eastern side of Fisher's Pan (between Aroe and Twee Palms) and a few at the west side of the Fisher's Pan

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* - a group of about 25 at the western side of Fisher's Pan, a single bird at a roadside wetland between WAT and Windhoek

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* – two at night over HAL camp, common in the NAM area

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* - one at Ombika waterhole, one at Goas, at least five at the eastern side of Fisher's Pan (between Aroe and Twee Palms)

Great Egret *Ardea alba* – one at Aroe waterhole in Etosha

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* – five at the northwestern side of Fisher's Pan

Secretary Bird *Sagittarius serpentarius* – (fairly) common in Etosha, up to six on some days, but only 1 or 2 daily around HAL (in the more open areas towards Rietfontein)

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* – one en route to EWL, about one daily in the OKA area, about 3-5 daily in the HAL and NAM areas, two between WAT and Windhoek on April 22

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus egyptius* – only one along the C40 between Kamanjab and Outjo

African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* – at least five along the C36 near Uis on April 9, large groups (60-80) came down to wash themselves at the waterholes Ombika and Namutoni around midday, singles and small groups in flight throughout Etosha

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus* – two along the C36 near Uis on April 9 (together with the white-backed vultures), one above OKA waterhole on April 14, 2-3 usually present around the Klein Namutoni waterhole



Lappet-faced Vulture (Klein Namutoni, Etosha)

Black-breasted Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis* – one adult on April 11, two on April 12 at RTL, 1 immature near Sprokieswoud on April 14, one immature near NAM on April 18, two adult birds around Nam on April 19, one adult at the turn-off D2512/C22.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus* – one along the C40 between Kamanjab and Outjo on April 13, one along the C22 en route to WAT on April 20, one on the plateau in WAT on April 21

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* – three on April 13 and 14 in the OKA area, two on April 18 and 19 in the NAM area

African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus* – one juvenile en route to Erongo on April 7, one adult patrolling over OKA waterhole on April 14

Pale Chanting Goshawk *Melierax canorus* - common, seen daily, usually between 10 and 20 daily in Etosha

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* – one around our room and the restaurant in HAL, one at HAL waterhole, several in NAM including the camp, 1-2 at WAT on April 20 and 21

Shikra *Accipiter badius* – an adult bird in WAT on April 20 (and a probable one near RTL on April 13)

African Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus* - a juvenile bird at WAT on April 22

Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur* - one on the afternoon drive in EWL on April 8

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* – only seen in Etosha, one near Sprokieswoud on April 13 and one on April 14 in the OKA area, a total of three on April 19 and one on April 20 in the NAM area.

Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii* - an adult pair together on April 8 and single birds on April 9 at EWL, an immature bird above the cliffs at WAT on April 22

African Hawk-Eagle *Hieraaetus spilogaster* – a subadult at Erongo, an adult along the C36 en route to Brandberg, three together on April 22 above the cliffs at WAT

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* – one adult along the C36, two adults on April 17 in the HAL area near Nuamses, one adult along the D2512 near WAT

African Pygmy Falcon *Polihierax semitorquatus* – two at the turn-off C35 and D2763 en route to RTL, one en route to Etosha along the C38 about 60 km north of Outjo

Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides* – one en route to BRA on April 9, common in the OKA and HAL area in Etosha

Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera* – one at Nebrowni on April 14, two southeast of Gembokvlakte on April 15 and another pair on the main road near Nuamses on April 16

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* – one along the road to Okondeka and one near Adamax on April 13, one on April 14 (south of Okondeka), one on April 15 (Gaseb area), one on April 16 en route to HAL

Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori* - five at RTL on April 12, common in Etosha, in particular in the OKA area

Ludwig's Bustard *Neotis ludwigii* – one along the entrance road that leads to Brandberg White Lady Lodge

Rüppell's Korhaan *Eupodotis rueppellii* – a pair along the entrance road that leads to Brandberg White Lady Lodge, a total of six along the D2359, an another pair along the C35 about 20 km north of Uis

Red-crested Korhaan *Lophotis ruficrista* – one on the afternoon drive on April 8 at EWL, two on the C35 on April 11, a male on the D2697 near RTL on April 13, two flushed at RTL were probably this species as well, one female near Springbokfontein on April 18, one on the afternoon drive at WAT on April 21

Northern Black Korhaan *Afrotis afra*- two males seen en route to BRA, a total of three in the BRA area, a few in the grassland at RTL, common in the OKA area in Etosha, also singles seen around HAL and NAM

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* - usually a pair at waterholes with permanent water and good cover (Nuamses, Goas, Kalkheuwel, Chudob, etc.)

Blue Crane *Anthropoides paradiseus* – one near Nuamses, three sightings of (probably) different pairs in the Fisher's Pan area

Spotted Dikkop *Burhinus capensis* - two on the night drive at RTL on April 12, one on the night drive in HAL and one on the night drive in NAM

Black-winged Stilt - *Himantopus himantopus* – several tens around Fisher's Pan and occasionally small numbers at waterholes around NAM, in particular Klein Namutoni

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* - a group of about 10-15 at the eastern side of Fisher's Pan between Aroen and Twee Palms

Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus* - a total of four around BRA lodge, common in Etosha (between 5 and 40 daily)

Crowned Plover *Vanellus coronatus* – common in Etosha (between 5 and 30 daily)

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus* - only seen 2-3 times around Fisher's Pan

Grey Plover/Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* – one at the eastern edge of Fisher's Pan

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* - only seen at waterholes in the NAM area (Chudob, Klein Namutoni) and around Fisher's Pan

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* – one at Rietfontein waterhole on April 17

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*- only seen at waterholes in the NAM area (Chudob, Klein Namutoni) and around Fisher's Pan

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* - one at OKA waterhole, only seen at waterholes in the NAM area (Chudob, Klein Namutoni) and around Fisher's Pan

Double-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus africanus* - best places to see this species were the road to Okondeka (>15) and the turn-off to Wolfsnes, also seen in the more open areas around HAL, i.e., towards Rietfontein

Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus* - a total of three on the nightdrive on April 13 in RTL

Grey-hooded Gull *Larus cirrocephalus* – about 10 on the western edge of Fisher's Pan on April 18

Namaqua Sandgrouse *Pterocles namaqua* – several tens in flight and one the ground in the BRA area, good views of birds on the road between Okakuejo Camp and Okondeka, regular at the waterhole around dusk in OKA, several sightings in the HAL (Rietfontein) area



Bronze-winged Courser/Namaqua Sandgrouse

Double-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles bicinctus*- four on the ground on a morning walk at EWL, two on April 11, at least 100 at the waterhole in OKA on April 13

Burchell's Sandgrouse *Pterocles burchelli* – one on the road to Aroe (coming from the Okevi side)

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* – one each morning at the restaurant of EWL

Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola* - very common to abundant
 Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* – (very) common
 Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* – seen at all locations and on most days of the tour (between 2 and 30)
 Rosy-faced Lovebird *Agapornis roseicollis* - very common and easy to see at EWL, two on April 10, about 15-20 daily at WAT
 Rüppell's Parrot *Poicephalus rueppellii* – one along the D2512 and three in WAT on April 20 and a total of ten in WAT on April 21
 Grey Lourie *Corythaixoides concolor* – seen on all days of the tour, very common in Etosha and WAT
 Greater Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* - one in flight at EWL on April 8
 Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus* - a juvenile being fed by bare-cheeked babblers at RTL
 Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* - one on the afternoon drive on April 8 at EWL
 Barn Owl *Tyto alba* - one nesting in Paula's cave on the afternoon drive at EWL, one on top of our room at dusk at HAL on April 16
 African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis* – heard in HAL camp and waterhole on April 16, and one seen at his day roost in HAL on April 18
 Southern White-faced Owl *Ptilopsis granti* – one seen on the night drive on April 12 at RTL
 Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus* – one at dusk in the camping area at BRA, one and four, respectively, on the night drives at RTL on April 11 and 12, at least 15! (no double counts) on the night drive in HAL, one at dusk on the afternoon game drive in WAT



Spotted Eagle Owl/African Scops Owl

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Bubo lacteus* – one on April 14 and two on April 15 at OKA waterhole
 Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* – two seen (and calling right above our heads) in HAL camp after returning from the night drive, one flushed from a tree in the reception area on a night walk in WAT
 Marsh Owl *Asio capensis* – one at dusk and almost certainly the same one on the night drive in HAL on April 17

Rufous-cheeked Nightjar *Caprimulgus rufigena* - several seen very well on both night drives at RTL, two at OKA waterhole on April 13, three on the night drive in HAL, and two at dusk when returning from the afternoon drive in WAT

[Freckled Nightjar *Caprimulgus tristigma* - heard regularly at EWL, did not actively look for it as I had seen and photographed this species in South Africa last December]

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* - a total of six sightings (usually 5-10 birds), seen in Windhoek, Omaruru, Btandberg area, and Namutoni in Etosha

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* - at least two (together palm and little swifts) at a petrol station in Omaruru

[Common Swift *Apus apus* - a possible late straggler in Etosha on April 13, views weren't good enough to be sure]

Bradfield's Swift *Apus bradfieldi* - common at WAT, also seen in Windhoek and Okahandja, but never really convincing views of the scaling on the breast

Little Swift *Apus affinis* - common, seen on most days

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* - fairly common, seen about 6-7 times throughout the tour including Windhoek area, near Kamanjab, and Etosha

White-backed Mousebird *Colius colius* - to my surprise only seen in Windhoek and in the Brandberg area

Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* - only seen en route from Etosha to WAT

Purple Roller *Coracias naevius* - single birds at RTL on April 11 and 12, common in WAT and many en route between Etosha and Waterberg

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* - seen on all days except April 10, common roadside bird and sometimes 100+ a day in Etosha

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris* - two flushed in the woodland along the dry riverbed in BRA

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus* - about 1-5 daily in EWL and RTL, occasional sightings en route in Damaraland, only one sighting of 3 birds in the OKA area (near Sprokieswoud), no sightings in the HAL area, between 2 and 5 daily in the NAM area and WAT

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* - at least 20 on the C40 between Kamanjab and Outjo

Violet Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus damarensis* - three adult birds late afternoon at HAL camp on April 16, two adults and a young one peeking out of the nest hole in a tree on April 17

Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* - two on the Dik Dik drive in NAM, one in WAT opposite the reception

[Bradfield's Hornbill *Tockus bradfieldi* - one in flight with uniformly brown upper wings and orange/red bill was almost certainly this species on the afternoon drive in WAT. Views were not good and long enough to tick though.]

African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus* - common, seen in EWL (1-2), BRA (2), RTL (2-8), and Etosha, few around OKA, regular around HAL, and common in NAM area including a group of 25 near Twee Palms. Common in WAT (more than 10 daily).

Monteiro's Hornbill *Tockus monteiri* - four on the first afternoon at EWL, one on April 8 and 9 in EWL, one in the campsite area in BRA on April 10, two on the walk to the campsite in RTL on April 11, five on the morning walk at RTL on April 12, one on the D2512 to WAT and quite common in WAT (3-5 daily)

Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus erythrorhynchus* – first seen on April 16, common in HAL, NAM and WAT

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus leucomelas* – one on April 8 at EWL, a total of three sightings in the Brandberg area (at the campsite/gallery forest along the dry riverbed), daily (5-15) in HAL, NAM and WAT

Damara Hornbill *Tockus damarensis* – quite hard work to find these, decent views at HAL camp but most convincing view was of one at close range on the access road to WAT

Acacia Pied Barbet *Tricholaema leucomelas* – singles at EWL on April 7, 8 and 9, one at RTL on April 12, one near Kapupuhedi on April 16, 2-4 daily in WAT (the road between the entrance gate and the reception gate is good place to see them at WAT)

Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni* - one male in the gallery forest along the dry riverbed at the BRA lodge

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* – one poorly seen in flight on the afternoon drive in EWL, excellent views of a pair at WAT at the turn-off to the campsite

Bearded Woodpecker *Dendropicos namaquus* – a female seen well behind our chalet in BRA

Pririt Batis *Batis pririt* – four on the morning walk at EWL on April 9, one male on the red trail in RTL, at least 3 on April 20 and 21 in WAT



Female Pririt Batis

Grey Lourie

White-tailed Shrike *Lanioturdus torquatus* - quite common at EWL (one along the entrance road on April 7, a total of six on April 8 and two on April 9), a total of four on the afternoon walk to the campsite at RTL on April 11

White Helmet-shrike *Prionops plumatus* – two on the track to HAL waterhole on April 17, a group of five on the Hartebeestdraai on April 18

Bokmakierie *Telophorus zeylonus* - only one sighting of a bird at the restaurant parking area of BRA lodge

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* – quite common, seen at EWL, BRA and RTL in low numbers (1-3), common in HAL, NAM and WAT (>5 daily)

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla* – one at EWL on April 9 from the restaurant, a total of four sightings in WAT.

Crimson-breasted Gonolek *Laniarius atrococcineus* – common at RTL and WAT (more than 5 daily), not seen in Etosha

Brubru *Nilaus afer* - two between Khorixas and Kamanjab, three on April 19 on the Dik Dik drive

White-crowned Shrike *Eurocephalus anguitimens* - first seen around Kamanjab and on the unpaved roads to RTL, quite common along the C40 between Kamajab and Outjo, resident in HAL camp, 10+ daily in HAL, NAM and WAT

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* - a male along the C40 between Kamajab and Outjo

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* - 1-2 daily at EWL, one in the BRA area, becoming a fairly common roadside bird towards Kamanjab, common at RTL, fairly common to common in Etosha and WAT

Fiscal Shrike *Lanius collaris* - common roadside bird en route to Erongo and Brandberg, a few at RTL, after that scarce with only sporadic sightings in Etosha where outnumbered by Lesser Grey Shrike

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* - very common

African Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* - one female on the morning walk in EWL on April 9, one pair in front of my room at RTL on both mornings

Cape Crow *Corvus capensis* - only seen in Etosha, most common around OKA, but also seen in HAL and NAM

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* - only seen in the OKA area in Etosha

Carp's Black Tit *Parus carpi* - two at EWL on April 8, excellent views of three on the red trail in RTL on April 11

[Ashy Tit *Parus Cinerascens* - a possible one at RTL on April 11]

Cape Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus minutus* - one on April 11 and a total of six on April 12 at RTL

Monotonous Lark *Mirafrapa passerine* - one at close range at RTL on the afternoon drive on April 12, a few potential ones in Etosha but could not positively identify them (they weren't signing)

Eastern Clapper Lark *Mirafrapa fasciolata* - one at RTL on the afternoon drive on April 12

[Fawn-coloured Lark *Calendulauda africanoides* - not seen, I expected this to be common after seeing tons of them in Kgalagadi, but not seen/identified]

Sabota Lark *Calendulauda sabota* - (at least) one on the afternoon drive in RTL on April 12, in Etosha it seemed much more common in the HAL and NAM areas (10-50 daily) than in the OKA area

Benguela Long-billed Lark *Certhilauda benguelensis* - very distinctive whistle (a bit like the sound of a bomb being dropped but higher pitched), the turn-off C35/D2359 (see Brandberg entry in the Birdfinder) is indeed an excellent place to see and hear this species, also constantly heard and seen the first 10-20 km north of the turn-off on the C35 (i.e., in the direction Khorixas)

Dusky Lark *Pinarocorys nigricans* - excellent views of four near the turn-off for Sprokieswoud

Spike-heeled Lark *Chersomanes albofasciata* - fairly common in Etosha, but low counts

[Gray's Lark *Ammomanes grayi* - two together with grey-backed sparrowlarks near the large pool at BRA lodge may have been this species, but they flew off before I could get good looks]

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* - three sightings in Etosha, twice in the OKA area, once at Chudob in the NAM area

Pink-billed Lark *Spizocorys conirostris* – good views of at least four birds on the road to Okondeka on April 14



Dusky Lark and Pink-billed Lark

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucotis* - a fairly large group (mixed with the species below) on the D2697 near RTL, small numbers in the OKA area (again usually together with Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark)

Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix verticalis* – first seen at BRA, common around RTL, good numbers on the road to Okondeka,

African Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans* – very common, seen on all days of the tour

Plain/Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola* – a few sightings throughout the tour, several tens near Okondeka in Etosha

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* - sporadic sightings of singles or small groups

White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis* – small numbers at EWL and BRA, a migrating? group of at least 50 near Wolfsnes in Etosha

Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata* – only seen once north of Windhoek

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* - common in EWL, RTL, BRA and WAT

Northern House Martin *Delichon urbicum* – large numbers (hundreds) were migrating north over RTL, also several tens near Okondeka

Greater Striped Swallow *Cecropis cucullata* - a few in Etosha, more regular in and around WAT

Rufous-chested/Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa* – one on April 16 en route to HAL

[Acrocephalus species – heard only at NAM waterhole but did not have my MP3 player with me to double-check]

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* - at least five on a lunch stop along the road near Kamanjab, a few on the afternoon drive in RTL, a few at HAL

[Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* – a more boldly colored and streaked cisticola species at Fisher's Pan may have been this species]

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus* – common in the OKA and HAL areas in Etosha and also seen in low numbers in the NAM area

Black-chested Prinia *Prinia flavicans* – common, seen on most days of the tour

Grey-backed Cameroptera (Bleating Warbler) *Cameroptera brachyura* - heard on most days of the tour and seen at all sites visited, but not seen in the OKA area

Barred Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes fasciolatus* – several seen well on the morning hikes on April 8 and 9 in EWL, also easy to see and hear at WAT (especially between the reception and entrance gate), heard at RTL and Etosha

Rockrunner *Chaetops pycnopygius* – one seen well on the morning hike on April 8 and at least two heard on April 9 at EWL

Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens* – one at EWL on the morning hike on April 9, one at on April 11 on the walk to the campsite at RTL, one at WAT near the reception on April 22

Southern Pied Babbler *Turdoides bicolor* - two along the C22 en route to WAT

Bare-cheeked Babbler *Turdoides gymnogenys* – one at BRA in front of our chalet, 3-5 daily in the lodge garden at RTL, one family group was feeding a young Jacobin Cuckoo in front of my room

Chestnut-vented Tit-Babbler *Parisoma (or Sylvia) subcaeruleum* – fairly common in EWL and WAT

Layard's Tit-Babbler *Parisoma (or Sylvia) layardi* – only seen at the campsite and gallery forest along the dry riverbed in BRA lodge

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea* - a group of at least forty on the afternoon game drive at RTL, two at NAM camp on April 19, about 15 at Klein Namutoni waterhole on April 20

Cape Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis nitens* - common throughout the tour

[Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* – two at RTL seemed to be this species, rather obvious black face mask but not 100% sure since this species seems not often reported in trip reports from this area, same with a bird coming to drink at HAL waterhole, good light in both cases]

Burchell's Starling *Lamprotornis australis* – a few seen at the Sprokieswoud in the OKA area in Etosha, common in WAT

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* – common at EWL, a few at BRA, one at HAL waterhole

Pale-winged Starling *Onychognathus nabouroup* – common in Windhoek, EWL, BRA and WAT

Groundscraper Thrush *Psophocichla litsitsirupa* – one at RTL on April 12, one in the HAL area on April 16

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys* - in Etosha only seen east of Halali Camp, fairly common around NAM and common in WAT

Kalahari Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas paeon* - in Etosha only seen east of Halali Camp, common around NAM and WAT

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata* – two near Uis, two single birds at BRA, a few around RTL, very common on the plains in the Okondeka-Adamax-Sprokieswoud area, but seemingly absent in the rest of Etosha,

Mountain Wheatear *Oenanthe monticola* – one in EWL on April 7, about 5-6 seen on the walk to the White Lady paintings in BRA

Tractrac Chat *Cercomela tractrac* – two at BRA positively identified (white rump clearly seen), quite a number of the roadside chats in the BRA area and the C35 between Uis and the Ugab River bridge must have been this species too, but did not check them after identifying the two above

Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris* - common, seen on all days of the tour

Southern Anteater Chat *Myrmecocichla formicivora* - just like capped wheatear this species was very common on the plains in the Okondeka-Adamax-

Sprokieswoud area, but scarce in the rest of Etosha. Also seen in the BRA area (about 4-5 daily)

Short-toed Rock Thrush *Monticola brevipes* - a male on the track that leads to the campsite at RTL, a couple at the Hartlaub's spurfowl site in RTL, another male on one of the walking trails at RTL

Chat-Flycatcher *Melaenornis infuscatus* - fairly regular, seen on most days, seemed most common around HAL and NAM, also seen at WAT, BRA and RTL.

Marico Flycatcher *Melaenornis mariquensis* - probably overlooked on the first part of the trip, but first noted in low numbers at OKA, very common around HAL and NAM, and quite common in the WAT area

Marico Sunbird *Cinnyris mariquensis* - a female at EWL on April 9, one male would feed regularly on the flowers near rooms 3 and 4 at RTL, but another pair seen in the lodge garden there, one male in WAT on April 22

Dusky Sunbird *Cinnyris fuscus* - common at EWL, BRA, seemed less common at RTL, strangely only one male in Etosha (probably overlooked), and quite common in WAT

White-browed Sparrow Weaver *Plocepasser mahali* - common, seen on most days of the tour

Sociable Weaver *Philetairus socius* - only seen in the OKA area in Etosha, I saw their nests but not the birds at RTL

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* - only seen on the first day of the tour en route to EWL

Great Sparrow *Passer motitensis* - seen on eight days in EWL, RTL, OKA, HAL and NAM

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffuses* - common, seen on 13 days of the tour

Scaly-fronted Finch/Weaver *Sporopipes squamifrons* - first seen on the afternoon game drive at RTL, seen on most days in Etosha in moderate numbers (a few tens),

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* - their nests but no birds in the garden of RTL (but they should be around), an adult and juvenile on the Dik Dik drive on April 19 and four birds (starting to moult) at NAM camp, a small group at WAT on April 21

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* - uncommon, a couple seen at EWL and about a handful at RTL

Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus* - only a handful seen in breeding plumage, the large majority was already in the eclipse plumage. Probably underrecorded. Low numbers at EWL on April 9, common at RTL, a few scattered sightings in Etosha and WAT

Chestnut Weaver *Ploceus rubiginosus* - a few were still in breeding plumage, but most were moulting or had already changed their plumage to dull brown, one at EWL on April 9, common at RTL with over 100 on April 12

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* - one male on the walk to the camp site at RTL on April 11, more than 15 at RTL on April 12, seen daily in Etosha, usually small groups of less than 20 birds, but occasionally larger groups of 50-200 birds. Also seen en route between WAT and Windhoek.

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* - seen on nine days on the tour, daily at EWL, also twice at RTL, one on April 16 en route between OKA and HAL, and seen on all three days at WAT

Red-headed Finch *Amadina erythrocephala* – three on April 9 at EWL on the morning hike, three on April 11 between Khorixas and Kamanjab, a group of four and another group of at least twenty at RTL on April 12, regular sightings in Etosha including at the waterholes in OKA and HAL camp

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis* - first seen in NAM camp, where a group of at least thirty birds was seen feeding (together with a few shaft-tailed whydahs), common along the D2512, small groups (5-8) in WAT on all three days.

Violet-eared Waxbill *Uraeginthus granatinus* – not as often seen as expected, twice at EWL, a single bird on April 12 at RTL and two on the entrance road near the gate at WAT

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* – a group of at least 20 in the valley where the White Lady paintings are in BRA

Black-faced Waxbill *Estrilda erythronotos* – quite common at EWL, RTL, HAL and WAT

Shaft-tailed Whydah *Vidua regia* – seen on eight days of the tour, about five on the morning walk in EWL on April 9, a male on April 11, regularly seen around the waterhole in OKA in groups of four up to fifty, a small group in NAM camp on April 19, one sighting of at least three birds at WAT

Long-tailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea* – one male at the Kalkheuwel waterhole on April 18



Long-tailed Paradise Whydah

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis* – only seen in Okahandja and Windhoek

African Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus* – at least three on the afternoon drive at RTL on April 12, a few scattered sightings in Etosha

Black-throated Canary *Serinus atrogularis* - common in EWL and BRA, a group of at least ten in RTL on the afternoon game drive on April 12, a small group on April 16 and a group of at least five in WAT on April 21

Yellow Canary *Serinus flaviventris* – twice seen in the NAM area, two sightings in WAT

[White-throated Canary *Serinus albogularis* - a few groups en route between places in flight seemed to be this species, but didn't stop to check]

Lark-like Bunting *Emberiza impetuani* - several en route to BRA, very good views of two birds at one of the pools at the restaurant in BRA, several seen well at RTL
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi* - common at EWL, very common at RTL, also regular visitor at HAL waterhole

Cape Bunting *Emberiza capensis* - seen in EWL, where quite common, and at least ten on the walk to the White Lady paintings in BRA

Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris* - two on the morning walk in EWL on April 9, one on April 11 and two on April 12 at RTL, one in WAT on April 21

OTHER WILDLIFE

Only a few snakes were seen, but they typically disappeared immediately. Skinks, geckos, agamas, lizards, etc. were seen regularly, but I didn't have a field guide with me to identify them on the spot.

[Python species - one seen just after dark on April 12 at RTL, which may have been Anchieta's dwarf python, *Python anchietae*]

Boulton's Namib Day Gecko *Rhoptropus boultoni* - one in BRA in the valley with the rock paintings

[Bibron Gecko species - one after dark in EWL looked like a bibron gecko to me]

Namibian Rock Agama *Agama planiceps* - common at EWL, BRA and RTL

Flap-necked Chameleon *Chamaeleo dilepis* - one at EWL, common in Etosha, 1-3 seen on most days

Rock Monitor *Varanus albigularis* - one at EWL

Water Monitor *Varanus niloticus* - a few seen throughout the tour

Ovambo Tree Skink *Trachylepis binotata* - one seen well at BRA in the woodland along the dry riverbed, twice flushed in Etosha

Western Rock Skink *Trachylespis sulcata* - common

Marsh Terrapin *Pelomedusa subrufa* - common at waterholes in Etosha

Leopard Tortoise *Stigmochelys pardalis* - regular sightings throughout the tour including EWL, BRA, RTL and Etosha

Common Sand Frog *Tomopterna cryptotis* - one on the Eagle Trail in EWL, identified by one of the other guests